

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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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.

RESPONSE TO WESSEL COLUMN

To the Editor:
I am responding to Andy Sichler’s letter to the editor appearing in the April 28 edition of *The Nugget*. I agree with most of what Mr. Sichler has to say in his response to Craig Wessel’s guest column in the April 21 edition. However, I take issue with his closing argument that “Many of us worked our way through college ...”
Yes, we did, but our summer earnings and much lower tuition and fees made getting a college degree much easier to pay for. I went to OSU and graduated in 1972. For the academic year 1973-74 the annual tuition and fees were \$536 (resident). In 2014-15 the

annual tuition and fees were \$7,800, and for the current year it is \$13,856 (<https://registrar.uoregon.edu/statistics/historical-tuition>).
Higher education at our two major public universities has increased 2,585 percent from 1974 to present, while over the same period the consumer price index has increase by 437 percent. Higher education is not supported with tax dollars like it was when I attended college. We can do better at supporting public higher education with tax dollars to make a college degree not so costly.

Our other big advantage was being able to

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Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday
Partly Cloudy
80/47



Thursday
Partly Cloudy
64/35



Friday
Partly Cloudy
51/34



Saturday
Partly Cloudy
54/33



Sunday
Partly Cloudy
59/33



Monday
Partly Cloudy
64/35



Tuesday
Partly Cloudy
68/37



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My rights or yours?

By Erik Dolson
Guest Columnist

On Friday, April 30, Deschutes County entered another COVID-19 lockdown. Restaurants closed to indoor dining, gyms are limited. Lives are disrupted.
Governor Kate Brown announced she was moving 15 Oregon Counties into the “extreme risk” category. Deschutes County made the list because of a rate of nearly 467 cases per 100,000 residents (from OregonLive.com), above the 200 cases per 100,000 set as a cut-off by the governor.

If I’m doing the math right, the governor says that if more than .002 of the population gets COVID, we are all at “extreme risk.” Deschutes County is at about .005 (rounded). One could say “more than double the rate!” Or, one could say it’s only three more people per thousand.

Here’s the real dilemma: Many thousands of people will be hurt by the new restrictions. I’m not saying action is not required, but that policies based on aggregated numbers harm those who have nothing to do with the crisis.

Deschutes County had more than 200,000 residents in the 2019 census, certainly more today, which would indicate that there are about 1,000 new cases.

Who are they? Are we reluctant to identify them because we don’t want to discourage anyone from getting tested, or negatively impact those who contracted the disease through no fault of their own, or stigmatize “carriers,” or invade their privacy, or infringe upon personal rights?

What about the rights of those whose livelihood or health or well-being depend on open businesses and social interaction?

This is the “dilemma of the commons,” of living in “community.” Sometimes individual rights take a back seat to community welfare. At the very least, we deserve to know where the 1,000 people who caught

COVID-19 contracted the disease.

The only information I could find was a recent update from Deschutes County Health Services that said:

Where are cases coming from?

- Extracurricular activities where safety measures are removed, like no masks during sports practice.
- Social gatherings outside of work hours without mask wearing and distancing.
- Travel-related exposures.
- Carpooling.
- Barbecues and outdoor events without mask and distancing.

Does that mean every “sports practice” in every school in the county, or only one or two? Does it mean every “social gathering” in the county, or only at some located in certain areas? It doesn’t take many to get to 1,000. Only about a thousand, in fact.

Seniors can’t go to a gym in Sisters because folks dancing at a bar in La Pine won’t wear masks? A waitress in Redmond is out of work because a coach in Bend or a vocal parent’s group doesn’t believe in COVID-19?

Shouldn’t we all pull together to end this scourge? Of course, but that isn’t the point, which is that irresponsible behavior on the part of some is having a devastating and unnecessary impact on everyone.

Perhaps identifying individual carriers or spreaders of COVID-19 in Deschutes County is too fraught with difficult questions. But why can’t we identify schools where COVID-19 is being spread at sports events or businesses where COVID-19 is being spread by staff or clientele, and urge them to change their procedures?

When we shy from difficult facts, we do more damage than good. And the fact is, the vast majority of Deschutes County citizens are not spreading COVID-19, but they will pay a difficult tab run up by those who are.

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

Got a great photo of life in Sisters Country?
Send your high-resolution photo to editor@nuggetnews.com.



It’s all up in the air...

A little spontaneous juggling broke out at Village Green Park last week.

PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK