

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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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.

Vaccine check is small price

To the Editor:
As a recently retired physician, I must respond to the letter from Steven Rudnitzky in the June 2 *Nugget*. He is distressed that his “beloved” Sisters Athletic Club is requiring proof of vaccination against COVID-19 in order to go without a mask at the gym. He even admits this “makes sense for safety reasons,”

but continues to say that this is a “gross over-reach of the power of the state,” and that vaccinated people have the same chance of serious illness due to COVID as getting “flu” (influenza). Influenza caused 61,000 deaths in the U.S. in 2017-18 and 810,000 hospitalizations. I’d say that most of those people who died were also likely “beloved”!

See **LETTERS** on page 31

Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday

PM Showers

58/38



Thursday

Partly Cloudy

66/44



Friday

PM Showers

64/44



Saturday

Partly Cloudy

77/50



Sunday

Mostly Sunny

82/53



Monday

Isolated Thunderstorms

80/50



Tuesday

Mostly Sunny

76/46



The Nugget Newspaper, LLC

Website: www.nuggetnews.com

442 E. Main Ave., P.O. Box 698, Sisters, Oregon 97759

Tel: 541-549-9941 | Email: editor@nuggetnews.com



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

Third Class Postage Paid at Sisters, Oregon.

Editor in Chief: Jim Cornelius
Production Manager: Leith Easterling
Creative Director: Jess Draper
Community Marketing Partner: Vicki Curlett
Classifieds & Circulation: Lisa May
Proofreader: Kit Tosello
Owner: J. Louis Mullen

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.

Published Weekly. ©2021 The Nugget Newspaper, LLC. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. All advertising which appears in The Nugget is the property of The Nugget and may not be used without explicit permission. The Nugget Newspaper, LLC. assumes no liability or responsibility for information contained in advertisements, articles, stories, lists, calendar etc. within this publication. All submissions to The Nugget Newspaper will be treated as unconditionally assigned for publication and copyrighting purposes and subject to The Nugget Newspaper's unrestricted right to edit and comment editorially, that all rights are currently available, and that the material in no way infringes upon the rights of any person. The publisher assumes no responsibility for return or safety of artwork, photos, or manuscripts.

Create belonging

By Jay Wilkins
Sisters School Board Chair

To my fellow board members, Superintendent Scholl, all the administrators, teachers, and employees – the entire team that makes Sisters School District come to life each day — thank you!

You have faced unprecedented circumstances and challenges, and you’ve risen to meet those challenges — and to serve our kids — time and again. By any objective measure, you’ve done a better job than any other district in the state, while also being humble, owning your mistakes and continuously improving. I commend you all.

In the role of school board chair, I’ve come to appreciate our greatest asset, the Sisters community. I’ve seen our community pass the local option, fund scholarships to our graduates, pass and implement the 2016 School Bond, create innovative programming and learning opportunities, and so much more. Our community differentiates our district. Did I mention that our community just passed a \$33.8 million bond to build a new elementary school?

Perhaps the best example of the power of our community is in the recent creation of our Mission and Vision. A shout-out to former board members Amanda Clark and Nicki Gregg, who worked with Curt, a cross section of district employees, parents, community members, the board, and others to craft this guiding document that helps us “Create Belonging, Prepare, and Inspire” every one of our students.

I’m proud of the work our district has done to support the Mission and Vision. Even in the grips of a pandemic, the district went above and beyond to support our kids. This is an incredible place for a vast majority of our students.

However, as I reflect on my performance in this role, I have to admit that I have failed some of our kids. I know of kids who faced overt and/or subtle forms of exclusion because of their race, their gender, their sexual identity, their religion, or some other aspect of their perfectly valid identity. Our Youth Truth survey data show we have pockets of kids who feel like they’re not welcome as their true selves. We can and must do better.

Making certain all students feel accepted and connected is not “extra”

or fluffy. It drives our high graduation rate and prepares each individual student for their future. When students feel they belong, they engage with staff and peers in classes and extracurriculars. When they engage, they learn and contribute to making our community stronger. That’s it in a nutshell — the reason public schools exist in the first place.

It sounds easy, but this work is hard. Creating a sense of belonging — if done improperly — can feel like a zero-sum game and create backlash or resistance. If done properly, it lifts every member of our community and makes us all stronger. I interpret the results of the recent election as a mandate to do this work properly, with everyone, despite the fact it’s hard.

I urge the board to tackle this challenge and pick up where we left our Proclamation of Equity and Anti-Racism last September. It did not get the attention it needed as we struggled to simply open our doors amidst changing and confusing guidance.

I urge the community to embrace this challenge, too. We have factions within our community that hold conflicting and incompatible views on a variety of issues. Each faction is valid and welcome as long as they don’t exclude or marginalize the other factions. Anger, rage, and demonization must be displaced by learning, healing, and acceptance.

This clash of culture is by no means unique to Sisters — it is playing out across the state, the nation, and the world. However, Sisters is a unique enough place that we can figure it out. Our community is too great of an asset to faction off and work against each other — we must strive to understand each other and do the hard work together.

To our students: Please know every single one of you belongs here. If someone speaks or acts in a demeaning way to you because of how you look, the color of your skin, who you love, the religion you follow, the pronouns you use — or because of any other wonderful feature of your identity — then the need to change is theirs. You are fine just the way you are.

Let’s make more progress against our Mission and Vision together. The return on that work will pay off in countless ways. Thank you for the opportunity to serve on the school board. Go Outlaws!

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

Serving the American Legion...



American Legion Post 86 installed new officers at their Wednesday, June 2 meeting night at The Hangar. Lance Trowbridge (right) is Post Commander and District 5 Commander, Kathie Downey is Post Adjutant and Finance Officer. Ed Owens is Vice Commander of Post 86. Gene Hellickson, Past Department Commander of the American Legion, swore the officers in.

PHOTO PROVIDED

Got a great photo of life in Sisters Country?

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