

# Roundabout SISTERS

**Bill Bartlett**  
Columnist

## Life in the bubble

When we moved here three years ago from Southern Oregon, I was told by a good friend who lives in Ashland that I was moving to a bubble. Ashland is affectionately known as “six square miles surrounded by reality.” I knew what he was describing about Sisters — a Lake Woebegone fantasy-like place where one is fairly isolated from a larger, less friendly, more dangerous world.

Well, he’s right. We do live in a bubble — of sorts — and happily, I’d say. Speaking for myself anyway.

Just take a look at last week’s front page of *The Nugget*. There was an above-the-fold picture of a dog frolicking in the Metolius. And a story about volunteerism. True, there was also a rare story of a traffic stop yielding a meth bust right downtown. But these were people passing through the bubble, not from the bubble.

The rest of the issue was dominated by stories of good works, school sports, the art scene, and saving trees. It felt a long way from Kabul, New Orleans — and even Portland.

The bubble is full of life, mostly joyful this week. The rabbit brush is turning yellow and the Aspens quaking through favorable weather, showing signs of approaching autumn. The deer and elk are in velvet. We’re counting the days until the snow returns, the dust settles, the smoke goes wherever smoke goes.

The trails are full of happy bikers and hikers. The campgrounds are all booked. Outdoor eateries are brimming with diners. The coffee shops are full, reminiscent of a Parisian café society. Tourists are still aplenty with many asking themselves and realtors if they too could live in this bubble.

There’s some fussing about masks and what our kids are being taught. Some pointed letters to the editor.

There’s cautious worry about the surge of COVID-19, yet life in the bubble goes on pretty much as always. And always means a sincere connection to nature and neighbors.

When there is a problem, like the homeless or affordable housing or food security, it’s a shared concern with a community-wide goal of making the problem go away. Or at least ameliorating it with some thoughtful, collective action. If we had a catastrophic fire, for example, there’s no place I’d rather be than in the bubble knowing that my neighbors would be hand-in-hand fighting the blazes. In Ashland, it was more a neighbor coming to your door and telling you your house was on fire and asking if you would like to borrow their hose.

In the bubble it’s hands-on. Not surprising since so many here in Sisters Country work with their hands. Keeping animals. Repairing things. And, for the most part, maintaining an optimistic outlook.

The number of nonprofits per capita in Sisters is stunning. I’ve heard it said that the number of Habitat for Humanity homes per capita in Sisters is at the top or near the top of all Habitat chapters. Just try to move here and not get a full-court press to volunteer your time and talents. There is no escaping, I proffer.

Here in Sisters Country old cars are a primary symbol of life in the bubble. This past weekend some of us made the journey to Madras to catch the Airshow of the Cascades, which features an impressive car show. Next month (September 25), downtown will be the scene of the Glory Daze Car Show.

The whole bubble thing feels so ‘50s, but I don’t think it’s nostalgia that’s driving it. Sisters folk are just plain decent people, mostly civil of tongue and pretty darned tolerant. It may not be exactly as Garrison Keillor eloquated, “where all the women are strong, the men good-looking, and the children are above average” — but it comes close.

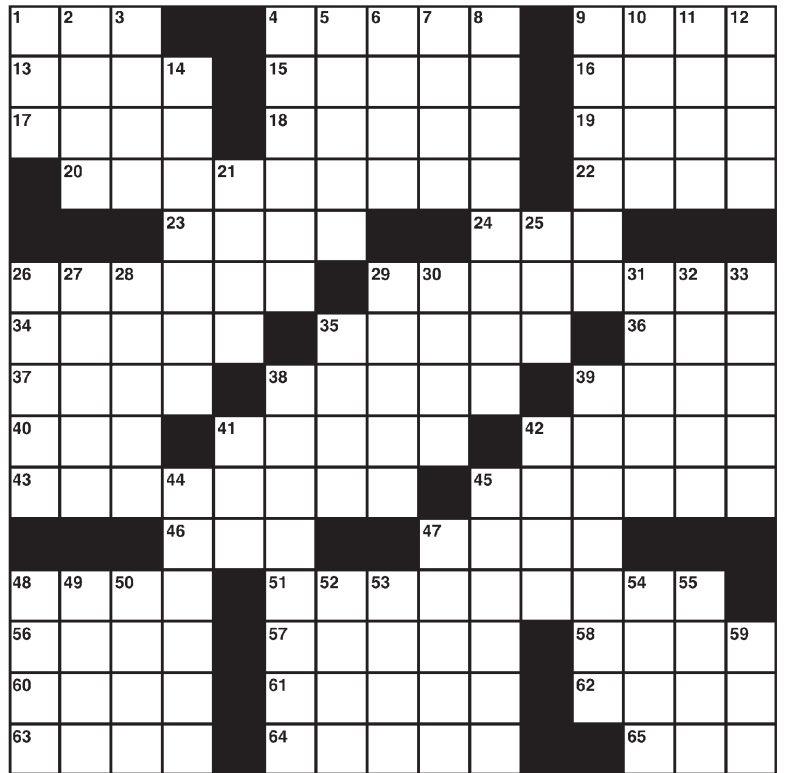
Being in a bubble doesn’t mean we are in the dark. Bubbles are transparent after all. We care for the greater world and the greater good yet we know our limits and where we can make a difference.

It doesn’t feel to me that here in the bubble we are going to let COVID conquer us or its bitter medicine drive us apart. That would burst the bubble and let out all the good air. And nobody wants that.

# The Nugget Newspaper Crossword

By Jacqueline E. Mathews, Tribune News Service

- ACROSS**
- 1 Request for silence
  - 4 Time \_\_\_ time; repeatedly
  - 9 Hiker’s trail
  - 13 Casual shirts
  - 15 Treasure stash
  - 16 Amiss; crooked
  - 17 Reach a high point
  - 18 \_\_\_ down; makes less intense
  - 19 “You \_\_\_ it!”; words of agreement
  - 20 Playwright
  - 22 Write an email, e.g.
  - 23 Computer fixer
  - 24 Be dishonest
  - 26 Shrill frantic cry
  - 29 Fictional detective Holmes
  - 34 Create a portrait
  - 35 Rental contract
  - 36 TV’s McClanahan
  - 37 Pulmonary organ
  - 38 Cries hard
  - 39 Barn mama
  - 40 “\_\_\_ no use!”; cry of frustration
  - 41 Bores for ore
  - 42 Monopoly player’s purchase
  - 43 One not yet of age
  - 45 Treat with tender affection
  - 46 “\_\_\_ scale of 1 to 10...”
  - 47 Farm building
  - 48 Mr. Amaz
  - 51 One who sues
  - 56 Performs on stage
  - 57 Britain’s dollar
  - 58 Flood survivor
  - 60 “There was an old woman who lived in a \_\_\_.”
  - 61 Jargon
  - 62 Sports event
  - 63 Imitates a kangaroo
  - 64 Word of welcome
  - 65 French article
- DOWN**
- 1 “The racer’s edge”
  - 2 Pay attention to



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

- 3 Use one of the five senses
- 4 Assault
- 5 Latte topper
- 6 Singer Tennille
- 7 Days before holidays
- 8 Antsy
- 9 Light color
- 10 Take \_\_\_; subtract
- 11 Journey
- 12 Jekyll’s alter ego
- 14 Figure \_\_\_; winter Olympics event
- 21 Get together
- 25 Fury
- 26 \_\_\_ up; go separate ways
- 27 Terre \_\_\_, IN
- 28 Automatic car wash cycle
- 29 Underground drain
- 30 Holbrook & Linden
- 31 Give an address
- 32 Heals
- 33 \_\_\_ over; faints
- 35 Sprinter’s path
- 38 Bill de Blasio’s city

— Last Week’s Puzzle Solved —



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- 39 Sunup
- 41 \_\_\_ cave; dad’s hideaway
- 42 Male red deer
- 44 Sounds
- 45 Frankness
- 47 Pig out
- 48 Punctuation mark
- 49 Repeat word-for-word
- 50 Word in a red octagon
- 52 Cut of pork
- 53 First cousin’s mother
- 54 Newborn horse
- 55 Renown
- 59 “...ain’t heavy, \_\_\_ my brother...”

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