

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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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.

Presidential failings

To the Editor:
I applaud Owen Herzberg’s letter to the editor (Wednesday, September 22) written from the heart of a veteran of the Vietnam war (“America on the wrong course”). This letter should be a wake-up call to all Americans to hold accountable President Biden and his administration for the debacle happening before our eyes at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
This President has failed on many fronts, outlined in Mr. Herzberg’s letter, but alarming is the fact that no one is taking responsibility

or being held accountable for these failures. What kind of message is that for us and our children?
We only need to focus on the Afghan failures, although our southern border chaos is a close second. The Afghan withdrawal is one of the sorriest American failures in decades — hundreds of Americans and Afghans left behind; \$60-80 billion in equipment; 13 servicemen and women murdered — all because this President had a deadline to meet. He, Chuck Schumer, Nancy Pelosi, Kamala

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Sisters Weather Forecast

Wednesday
October 6 • Partly Cloudy
56/31



Thursday
October 7 • Mostly Sunny
58/31



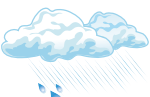
Friday
October 8 • Partly Cloudy
58/33



Saturday
October 9 • Partly Cloudy
61/38



Sunday
October 10 • PM Showers
56/32



Monday
October 11 • Partly Cloudy
47/28



Tuesday
October 12 • Partly Cloudy
49/30



The Nugget Newspaper, LLC

Website: www.nuggetnews.com
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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, \$60; six months (or less), \$35. First-class postage: one year, \$105; six months, \$75.

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Hitting the track...



The littlest riders got in a lot of fun at an improvised dirt track in the Three Wind Shopping Center during Sisters Moto’s grand opening on Saturday, October 2.

PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Keeping up a dialogue on houselessness in Sisters

By Cory Misley
City Manager

Houselessness or homelessness — depending on who you may be talking with — is a situation many are facing in Sisters Country predominantly living in the National Forest. The pandemic has certainly expanded the situation, as employment opportunities have fluctuated and housing costs have climbed even higher while evictions have risen. There are a multitude of variables and circumstances that combine to make houselessness a very complex, challenging, and controversial issue.
One thing is certain, we must work together on this issue — which can bring about strong emotions and concerns from differing viewpoints — without being emotional. There seems to be broad support in Sisters Country to answer the question of what more is needed here to help those, especially families, who want and need help. Inevitably, to engage, assist, and transition those wanting help requires a multifaceted approach; fortunately several of those pieces are already in place or actively being worked on here.
One of the best ways to help is to avoid people becoming houseless in the first place, which is, of course, easier said than done. However, the point is that stable, affordable housing is the linchpin for avoiding houselessness and solving houselessness. This was underscored a couple of weeks ago by U.S. Housing Secretary Marcia Fudge emphasizing that “housing first” — opposed to “treatment first” — is where states, counties, and cities should be focusing, and the federal government is offering resources to do so through their recently launched House America initiative.
In 2017, local volunteers worked hard to establish Sisters Cold Weather Shelter, utilizing spaces in churches, and operated it for three years until COVID-19 derailed the arrangement in 2020. Fortunately, some churches are still allowing use of their space, although not during February and March, to be used heading into this winter. Several local groups, including the

Kiwanis Club, have for many years consistently rallied to offer food, clothing, and other supplies to assist the unhoused in Sisters. Groups such as Family Access Network (FAN) have been a staple, providing crucial support to children and families in Sisters with the goal of keeping them in school and healthy.
This is not an exhaustive list, but it highlights that in Sisters Country, although not as much as some would like to see, there are resources and an existing support network.
Furthermore, our local law enforcement officers both through the Deschutes County Sheriff’s Office and Forest Service frequently interface with the unhoused. Often they offer support, but at the end of the day they are not social workers or case managers specializing in building relationships to connect people to housing, employment, and support services. Deschutes County Health Services does have specialized, trained staff members working with the unhoused, but their capacity is limited and primarily focused on Redmond and Bend. It has become apparent that one area for improvement is better and sustained coordination beyond what even the most generous volunteers can offer.
The takeaway from all of this is that the conversations and coordination must continue, but we must do so objectively through strengthened partnerships.

On Wednesday, October 13, starting at 5 p.m., the Sisters City Council and the Board of County Commissioners will hold one of their biannual joint meetings to discuss an array of topics. Houselessness will be the first item on the agenda with the goal of hearing from key people from several of the organizations mentioned earlier and what they are seeing and hearing from unhoused in Sisters Country. No decisions will be made at that meeting. We ask that if you are interested in this issue, you stay engaged while we continue to gather information, facilitate dialogue amongst partners, and ultimately work toward policies and interventions that have a positive impact on both the unhoused in Sisters Country and our community.

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