

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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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.

Water table

To the Editor:
What? In the November 13 edition of *The Nugget*, page 1, Sisters Public Works Director Paul Bertagna says, “We have a robust, powerful aquifer under us. In tests, it recharges in seconds, not minutes. We drilled the new well to create more capacity, not because we’re

running out of water.” His remark is regarding water availability for the 359 homes scheduled to be built in the Sisters Woodlands project.
On page 4, under News Nuggets, I see “Wells running dry? Reports of water wells drying up in Sisters Country are increasing. If your well, or a neighbor’s, has petered out,

See LETTERS on page 9

Sisters Weather Forecast

Wednesday Nov. 24 • Mostly Cloudy 46/33 	Thursday Nov. 25 • Mostly Cloudy 57/40 	Friday Nov. 26 • Showers 54/40 	Saturday Nov. 27 • Mostly Cloudy 61/40 
Sunday Nov. 28 • Partly Cloudy 61/39 	Monday Nov. 29 • Mostly Cloudy 57/40 	Tuesday Nov. 30 • PM Showers 55/43 	

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442 E. Main Ave., P.O. Box 698, Sisters, OR 97759
Tel: 541-549-9941 | Email: editor@nuggetnews.com



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Giving thanks...



In this season, we give thanks for the bounty of natural beauty that surrounds us in Sisters Country.

PHOTO BY JIM CORNELIUS

An era of perceived victimization

By Bren Gates
Guest Columnist

I have family members who feel alienated in Oregon, muzzled, unable to speak their minds in what they perceive as a liberal state. After Thanksgiving they will search for property in Florida, to be in the sun and have fun with people who think like they do. They actually used the words “joining our tribe.”

I can honestly say I empathize. I like to think of myself as independent, objective, looking at both sides of an argument. Yet, nowadays, not taking a firm stand is considered weak, unworthy. When others voice strong and differing opinions, I too feel muzzled, unheard, unable to defend myself, and maybe a little unsafe.

We are living in an era of perceived victimization.

I remember a time when friends with opposing views could sit around a table, discuss things, and still remain friends. So I must ask: Is this victimization real, or just so much noise? Victimization invites blame, but now the voices are louder, more vulgar, angrier — amplified by social media platforms and targeted news outlets.

Women still feel they don’t have wage equality or opportunity. Blacks explain that whites will never understand their experience. The LGBTQ community voices its indignation at thugs who see them as less than human. After years of hard work, students no longer believe in the American dream, their debt load unbearable. Blue-collar workers watched good union jobs go overseas, and then an influx of immigrants taking low-paying jobs, driving their incomes deeper and deeper into the swamp. The senior who saved his entire life is concerned his life raft is at risk, swallowed by inflation and the entitled druggie living on the streets. Banks and Wall Street get bailed out, yet the middle-class American owing taxes is threatened with garnishment. Parents are concerned social media entices confusion concerning sexuality, while those of faith, who used to feel safe in this country, now sense government favors debauchery and weakmindedness. Some suggest they are persecuted and judged as non-empathetic, closed-minded, controlling.

Victimization is everywhere. The pain is real. Everyone is being told that the other is fake, and only

their personal viewpoint, created in an echo chamber of tribal alliance, is real. Does anybody else see the impotent, childhood tantrum in all this — the stomping foot, the angry tears, the screaming, “It’s so unfair”?

Like it or not, we are all moving through this loud, technological new age together. It is our culture now. We no longer live in the 1950s. We are never going back there. Technology has given rise to millions of voices looking for safety, a reflection that says their pain is real.

Pandora’s Box is open. The demons of victimization and blame are free to roam, form alliances, but maybe it’s time to ask ourselves if these shrieking demons are as real as they need to be. I honestly don’t understand those who imply “the other” needs to die. How freaking afraid is someone who suggests that a person with an opposing view doesn’t deserve to live? This is not bravery. This is not righteousness. Plain and simple, it is fear, the need to control a society that feels out of control.

Anger and fear do nothing when it comes to rational decision-making.

I hope we can begin to see this new culture for what it is. Voiced growing pains. It’s ugly, but there is also opportunity here. *The other* is not a Black person or a white person, a transgender or an immigrant, a congressman or your neighbor; *the other* is the victimization we create in our own heads.

Fortunately the gods left one more gift at the bottom of that nasty box for Pandora: Hope. Hope brings about the willingness to see and grow. Instead of shouting back in anger, we can stand quiet, listen to the pain and fear, then try to devise solutions for ourselves and others.

I hope that you will join me this Thanksgiving — stand with a quiet, grateful heart. Let others know you will not be pulled into victimization dialogue, and remind your neighbor that you choose to “be a neighbor,” and will never see a fellow American as “the other.”

A portion of my family is moving to Florida. Instead of getting into a debate this holiday, I plan on listening to their excitement while letting them know I’m not the enemy, that Oregon isn’t the enemy. I will suggest that opinions are valid, but so is an open heart. I will miss our conversations.

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