

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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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.

Nonpartisan county commission

To the Editor:

On January 3, the Deschutes County Clerk's Office updated the voter registration database. At that time there were 153,912 voters across the county registered to vote in federal elections. Of these, 31 percent are registered for the Democratic Party and 29 percent for the Republican Party. The remaining 40 percent are not affiliated with either of the two major parties in the state: 33 percent are nonaffiliated voters (NAV) and 7 percent are registered for one of the seven minor parties (e.g., Independent, Libertarian, etc.).

Many of these voters may not realize that their May 2022 primary ballot will only have nonpartisan seats on their ballots. For example, two of the three Deschutes County Commissioner seats are up for reelection in May and only those voters who are registered for one of the two major parties will see the partisan (D or R) candidates on their ballots.

Then, in the November 2022 general election, all voters see all candidates. The 40 percent have no say during the primary.

To correct this situation, last year we started a grassroots effort to make our county commissioner seats and elections nonpartisan. This petition requests the elections of county commissioners be nonpartisan, like all other elective county positions. Currently in Oregon, 72 percent of the 36 counties have nonpartisan elections of commissioners. If on the ballot and passed, Deschutes would follow the trend that Oregonians prefer, and making it 75 percent of all counties.

Along with a small army of volunteer circulators, and in spite of COVID restrictions, we have managed to collect 66 percent of the

minimum required signatures (5,766). With 1,967 to go, we are in an all-out push to find potential petition signers, places to sit and collect signatures (tabling), and more volunteer circulators.

Should this measure pass, it will make it possible for all voters to have a voice in the elections of our county commissioners. We hoped to have Initiative 2021-01-I before the voters in May 2022. If we fall short of the goal for May election, we will continue to work until the August deadline for the November 2022 election.

In the next few weeks, we will be out in as many places around the county as we can. We would love for others to join our group of circulators, sign the petition (if you have not already), and offer places for us to table to seek potential signers. If you want to learn more, track our progress, read the initiative text, or contact us, please go to <https://www.nonpartisan-deschutes.org>. The Nonpartisan Deschutes County (NCC) Committee would also like to remind voters to check their registration status before the April 26 voter registration deadline.

Susan Cobb

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Decline of CNN

To the Editor:

As we observe the apparent decline of CNN in viewership, could it be due to their honesty, integrity, and strict adherence to the Journalistic Code of Ethics? I guess you may think so if still addicted to 24/7 messages of hate, racist rhetoric, lies, disinformation,

See **LETTERS** on page 17

Poverty next door

By Judy Trego
Guest Columnist

People all around us every day — people we never think about or see, the gas station attendant, waitress, barista, cashier, fast-food drive-through person, or clerk at the store you are shopping at — may be living below the poverty line.

Sisters' poverty rate is 12 percent. That means every one out of eight people you see are struggling in Sisters. We need to look out for each other, see our neighbors. You may have a single mom or dad living next door; they look just like you, but their water just got shut off and they are walking their kids to the park to use the bathroom and wash up before the school day begins. Their heat just got shut off so they are wearing three pairs of pajamas. They are embarrassed to go the food bank due to lack, because lack and shame go hand in hand.

They can't ask for help because of the deep isolation that makes them feel like they're the only one in the community going through this; after all, everyone has money, right? They question: Why didn't I? What is wrong with me? What did I do wrong? Nothing, is the answer. We are all equally important to our communities, and while others have much, there are so many with so little due to some unfortunate circumstance. Not everyone can pick themselves up by their bootstraps.

So, what can we do as a community? See each other. Watch out for each other. If we can slip the person pumping our gas a few extra dollars, you'd be surprised how grateful they will be and how a little bit of kindness can make someone's entire day and possibly give them enough money to buy

their lunch that day.

Watch for signs in our everyday activities because, if we do, we will be able to see, and, seeing, become conscious of the needs of people in our community. The more you look, the more you see. Help without wanting anything in return, give grace. Help without judging, help without recognition, help without reservation. All of us together can change an entire community. We never know by the way someone looks if they need help.

Unkempt children may mean they might not have a place to lay their heads.

Our server or dishwasher in the restaurant may not have eaten that day.

A parent may be working three jobs and not be able to fully support his or her children's education. We shouldn't look down on someone standing on a street corner because we don't know how they ended up there.

A family may have eaten pancakes for breakfast every morning for six months because you can buy a bag of mix for \$8; they may have eaten pasta every night for six months because \$10 worth will last all week.

They may have never been to a school dance because they didn't have the proper clothes.

They may have never been on a vacation and never been able to fully answer the question, "What did you do this summer?"

These are things many of us never even have to think about, but it is the reality of many and the poverty next door. Let's change this together. We can do it!

To access information on poverty statistics for Sisters visit: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/sisters-or-population>.

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

Sisters Weather Forecast

Wednesday

February 9 • Mostly Sunny

63/38



Thursday

February 10 • Sunny

69/37



Friday

February 11 • Sunny

58/29



Saturday

February 12 • Partly Cloudy

59/32



Sunday

February 13 • Partly Cloudy

63/37



Monday

February 14 • Partly Cloudy

49/30



Tuesday

February 15 • Partly Cloudy

51/30



The Nugget Newspaper, LLC

Website: www.nuggetnews.com

442 E. Main Ave., P.O. Box 698, Sisters, OR 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: Beth Jacobsen

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, \$70; six months (or less), \$45. First-class postage: one year, \$110; six months, \$80.

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Soaring sunset...



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