

### The Informed Voter & Citizen Advocate

Member (Zoom) Meeting

March 11, 2021 at 11:30 am

Rick Bennett, Shirley Weathers, and Bill Walsh

**Your Voice, Your Future, Advocacy 101--Rick Bennett:** Former Director of Government Relations for AARP Oregon, Rick has advocated for nonprofit organizations for over 20 years. He gained further experience regarding the legislative process while serving four years in the Nevada Legislature. "In my work as an advocate, every day was an opportunity to make my community—on one level or another—a better place."

**Cyber Tour of OLIS—Shirley Weathers and Following a Bill Through the Legislature—Bill Walsh:** Shirley and Bill’s experience working in state Legislative processes is shared, both having worked for well over a decade each for a statewide policy advocacy nonprofit based in SLC, UT that advocated for low-income and special needs populations. During Utah’s 45-day Legislative Sessions, that meant full-time engagement in the Capitol. The organization had LWV representation on their Board so we worked with the League’s legislative team as allies. They have carried that experience over and now work on the LWVOR Action Team, Bill as Health Care portfolio, Shirley as Climate Change/Radioactive Waste portfolio.

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## President's Pen

We want to thank Precious Edmonds from Dancing Hearts Consulting for a great presentation last month about the Census. This month, we turn to the talents of our own members as they show us how to be "Informed Voters and Citizen Advocates." Bill Walsh and Shirley Weathers will demonstrate how to use the Oregon Legislative Information System (OLIS) and follow a bill through the legislature. Rick Bennett will teach us how to be good citizen advocates based on his experience with the Nevada legislature and AARP. I hope you can attend.

Meanwhile we plod on through this pandemic with our multitude of Zoom meetings. I am finding that Zoom is really good for some things like OLLI classes, some of which have unlimited enrollment because seating is not an issue. (I think that Bonnie Johnson and I are in at least three classes together!) We seem to be making these Zoom meetings work for LWVRV as well. We have been getting about a quarter to a third of membership to monthly meetings and Zoom works quite well for committee and Board meetings. I do long for seeing you all in the flesh and hope that it may be so in the Fall. Meanwhile, stay safe, follow the CDC guidelines, and do your best to get vaccinated.

See you all on Thursday, March 11 at 11:30 for our Zoom meeting! We will be starting the program promptly so as to get through everything and still have time for questions.

Margie Peterson, President LWVRV

The League of Women Voters Rogue Valley welcomes submissions to the newsletter, *The Voters' Voice*. Editor Jim Buck can be reached at 541-830-0602 and [newsletter@lwvroguevalley.org](mailto:newsletter@lwvroguevalley.org)

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## DEI and RCV (Oh, so many meaningful initials)

“DEI” - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, a League lens with which to evaluate issues and actions, is a synergistic co-partner with Ranked Choice Voting (RCV).

I am on a discussion list with Michelle Whittaker, so was pleased to see her article [“What Comes After Black History Month”](#) in the most recent *Ms Magazine*. She looks at reforms that mean something to minority groups (like Black Women) beyond a month of celebration.

*“Echoing the words of Shirley Chisholm,  
‘we must be at the table to affect positive change,  
and if they don’t give us a seat, we bring a folding chair.’  
Our “folding chair” to address representation is electoral reform:  
fair representation with ranked-choice voting.”*

Michelle explains that our electoral systems need to reflect our elected bodies and reforms like RCV do just that. She states [“Ranked-choice voting](#) helps increase the diversity of candidates and elected offices. It dials back toxic elements of campaigning that plague our current process.”

More specifically, she explains that “[W]e should no longer determine who is most viable (or should “wait their turn”) because we fear vote splitting. We should no longer view voting as a zero sum game instead of a process for fully expressing our preferences like we do in everyday life. We should no longer have negative campaigns that tear down people rather than focus on the issues our communities face and the policy solutions we can support.”

As we documented likewise in our local LWVRV study, as well as the LWVOR study, she explains that “RCV opens up the possibilities for more choice and ensures voters have their voices heard.... Ranked-choice voting is about expressing one’s vote and outcomes that reflect the collective desire of voters.”

While the author concentrates mostly on single seat races for which she states that “Ensuring a majority system is especially important for “non-traditional” candidates, or those who break the status quo of our current elected officials.....,” RCV used in multiple winner races does even more for DEI. Michelle points to personal situations, when she writes: “In my home state of Maryland, **women make up 44 percent of those elected in multi-member districts** and people of color are 45 percent; but in the single-member districts, women hold 41 percent of seats and people of color only hold 23 percent of seats.”

As we know, more jurisdictions and states are embracing RCV. It’s currently used in 21 local elections throughout the US, and six states have implemented it for overseas and military votes. [Oregon could be the 7<sup>th</sup> state regarding overseas ballots if [HB 2685](#) passes this session.] The state of Alaska adopted RCV as part of an open primary system (noted several times in the past week in regard to the race **Lisa Murkowski** will face in 2022), and Maine was the first state to adopt it statewide for federal elections.

Keep RCV on your radar as both a successful and beneficial electoral reform as well as an avenue to provide a level playing field to represent more women, other gender minorities, political minorities, and folks who identify as BIPOC.

Barbara Klein

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – Our Ongoing Challenge.

--- By Joyce Puccini Chapman, for now.

“Peace is not the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice.” Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., [Letter from Birmingham Jail](#), 1963.

The January 6, 2021 Insurrection shook me to my core and disrupted our peace. We saw white supremacy in full display as armed, angry, white men and women stormed our Capitol, spewing racial epithets and desire to lynch then Vice-President Mike Pence, Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, and others they perceived as enemies of their white supremacist views.

Today I turn to white supremacy from the lens of one local Black activist, Mr. Kokayi Nosakhere, and a Black social worker, Alishia McCullough, M.S. Black activists are not a monolith and not all will agree with them, but they sparked this column. Dr. King’s quote from 1963 is relevant today. Our peace has been broken and we have an opportunity to create justice by eliminating white supremacy and changing the culture that created it. How do we do that? Figuring out what white culture is and how white supremacy shapes it is among the beginning steps to eliminating this ugly aspect of white culture in America. Viewing ourselves from a Black perspective is a valuable tool in this effort.

Mr. Nosakhere published [Dear White America, Here Is A Solution to White Supremacy](#) and posted it on Facebook as part of his educational effort during Black History Month. He begins by warning the reader, “The following is written in a stream of Black consciousness and will not reflect white cultural thought norms.” We often express interest and willingness to learn about the Black Experience. This essay and another he posted later, [The 7 Circles of Whiteness](#), by Alishia McCullough, M.S. provide an unvarnished view of how some Black people view white people.

Mr. Nosakhere asserts that “White people don’t like being seen as white people.” Ms. McCullough introduces her article this way, “The seven circles of whiteness is a learning tool that puts a name to the myriad of ways that whiteness exists as a construct in American culture by highlighting specific behaviors and thinking patterns associated with each of the categories.” Both authors encourage self-reflection as a means of self-healing which, per Mr. Nosakhere, is necessary to combat white supremacy and systemic racism and a prelude to white people reaching out to help heal other white people. He asserts that we as a white culture need to heal the sense of separation between individuals. Black people cannot do this work for us. Ms. McCullough concludes that the racial healing is a life-long process.

I am going to leave you here. I challenge you to read and reflect on these two articles. My offer to discuss race remains open to all. I am on this journey with you. Friends of mine who read both articles had strong emotional reactions, as did I. They are offered in the spirit of challenging beliefs to help us move forward toward peace, justice, and equity.

The first DEI column listed recommended reading, including Robin DeAngelo’s [White Fragility](#). I highly recommend it as a starting point for those of us who are not comfortable discussing issues of race.

For those who are interested in exploring the variety of ways that white supremacy has evidenced itself throughout our history and today, we offer the following articles:

[Broken Treaties: An Oral History Tracing Oregon’s Native Population](#)

[Oregon’s Black Pioneers](#), a video on OPB

[Asian Americans Call for Action and More Attention Paid to Surge in Anti-Asian Hate Crimes, Democracy Now! February 15, 2021](#)

*The Devil You Know* by Charles M. Blow

#### Quote During Inaugural Week

“While it is tempting to choose this moment to relax, to let our newly inaugurated leaders take things from here and clean up the messes, democracy cannot succeed if we sit back and assume our elected officials will take care of everything on their own.” Rabbi Ruhi Sophia Motzkin Rubenstein, Temple Beth Israel



Welcome to the Official Oregon State Redistricting site <https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/Redistricting>. Redistricting is the once-a-decade process of redrawing United State House of Representatives (Congressional) and Oregon State Senate and State House of Representatives (Legislative) district boundaries to account for changes in population.

### **Make Your Voice Heard – Testify Virtually!**

**Click on either of the two links below to find out how to provide your written or oral testimony on Congressional and Legislative redistricting.**

March 10, 2021 at 5:30 PM for District 2 including Jackson County

<https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/redistricting/Lists/Calendar/DispForm.aspx?ID=4&ContentTypeld=0x010200E50E5D86E53A4C41895CBFCE19057E3C>

March 20, 2021 at 1:00 PM for District 2 including Jackson County

<https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/redistricting/Lists/Calendar/DispForm.aspx?ID=10&ContentTypeld=0x010200E50E5D86E53A4C41895CBFCE19057E3C>

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## **Letter to the Editor**

### **2020 Census: Group We Count Oregon Tackles Enormous Challenge Despite COVID-19**

Kudos to Precious Edmonds for showing the LWVRV at our February meeting how [We Count Oregon](#) used determination and 21<sup>st</sup> Century tools to build diversity, equality, and inclusion into the most difficult Census in recent memory. As someone who spent 13 years struggling to utilize data from the 1980 and 1990 Censuses to highlight poverty on behalf of my nonprofit employer, I can attest to the critical need to get-out-the-count in all of the hard to count communities We Count Oregon targeted: people of color, immigrants, renters, rural communities, and parents of children under 5. And as someone who walked door-to-door as an enumerator for the 1970 Census, I know how hard it is to convince people who are reluctant to participate that it's safe and important to do so. If there had been a pandemic back then, we would have been dead in the water. No Internet. Indeed, We Count Oregon found their original on-the-ground face-to-face game thwarted due to COVID, but they fired up all of the technological tools at their disposal and implemented an impressive online Plan B, even exceeding their original goal for volunteers to reach out to their communities. If you didn't manage to attend the Zoom meeting on February 11—or even if you did—watch this wrap-up [video](#) or visit the [We County Oregon website](#). The Population Research Center at Portland State University's Census Count report is another good resource. And stay tuned as the same group that developed We Count Oregon shifts to the We Draw Oregon campaign, seeking in collaboration with others to ensure a fair and equitable redistricting process in Oregon.

Shirley Weathers  
Member, Eagle Point

## Medford City Council Meeting Summary - Sally Smith, Observer

Feb. 18, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 6 PM using a Zoom format.

Present were Mayor Sparacino, Alex Poythress, Sarah Spansail, Clay Bearnson, Tim D'Alessandro, Chad Miller, Kevin Stine, Eric Stark, and Michael Zarosinski.

Three retiring Police Department employees were recognized for their service to the City.

- \* **SORED**I Rep. Colleen Padilla gave a 5 Strategy quarterly report on the agency. She said they had distributed \$4.8 million to 456 grants. There were 1106 requested grants.
- \* **Downtown Medford Association** Rep. Ryan Robertson reported they have a new DMA Director - Danada ? (didn't catch full name). The Association is in the planning stage for an intensive clean-up of downtown Medford in 2021.
- \* **The Council** passed a Mayor's Admin. order for a 7th extension of a local state of emergency for the city as a result of Covid-19, effective through June 1, 2021.
- \* **The Council** approved a contract in the amount of \$224,102 to Michels Corp. for installation of cured pipe lining in deteriorated sewer lines at various locations in the city.
- \* **The Council** approved a contract to Pavement Protectors in the amount of \$251,782 to crack seal various streets in the city.
- \* **Passed** a revised 20-year sewer agreement with Rogue Valley Sewer Services. The Reclamation district treats wastewater for Eagle Point, Talent, Phoenix, Jacksonville, White City, and Medford. In 2017 the DEQ notified the agencies that the current agreement had obsolete references to multiple parties and definitions. The new agreement cleaned up this language.
- \* **Passed** a resolution replacing municipal code pertaining to industrial waste pretreatment with more current and accurate language, again at the request of the DEQ. This code refers to industries and businesses, not households.
- \* **Passed** an ordinance annexing 230 acres of property located NE of North Foothill Rd and Hillcrest Rd. (This was a carryover item from the earlier council meeting. See 2/4/2021 summary for clarification).
- \* **Approved** a minor amendment to the general land use plan to change the density of 5 acres on the west side of Cherry Lane from multiple residential to single residential. The multiple residential designation was due to a misunderstanding between the developer and the city.
- \* **Approved** a minor amendment to the general land use plan concerning 1.85 acres at 650 Royal Ave. from high density residential to service commercial. The building originally housed a business, then was used as a church and new owners would like to revert back to a service commercial building.
- \* **Council Business:** Councilman D'Alessandro reported on a request from the County Commissioners for the City to sign on to their letter to Governor Brown requesting an immediate reduction in the COVID-19 rating for Jackson County. The consensus was to reject the request as the next rating will be announced on 2/24/2021.
- \* **Jason Caplan** (Kaplan?) was approved as a Pro-Temp Judge.
- \* **Councilman Stein** reported on the interview process of 3 companies as head contractors for the new Sports Complex. Pense Construction came out on top but the process is not complete. He also reported the Rogue Valley International Airport is searching for a new additional airline. Meeting adjourned at 7:43 PM

## **Jackson County Board of Commissioners**

**Rick Bennett, Observer**

Last year, I provided a brief summary of Jackson County Board of Commissioners and their process for decision-making, including type of actions they take at their regular Board meetings on Wednesday morning (approval of contracts, intergovernmental agreements, easements, advisory committee appointments and so forth). I noted that there is very little discussion related to these action items during the Board meetings – with the exception of those few items that require a public hearing – and that much of the commissioners’ discussion and deliberations take place during the weekly work sessions and staff meetings.

While a variety of issues and concerns are discussed at the Tuesday morning work sessions and Thursday morning staff meetings, it should surprise no one that much of the commissioners’ time has been spent on the impact of COVID-19 on county residents and businesses and wildfire recovery efforts. In fact, every work session and staff meeting agenda has these two concerns listed. If you have any interest in the current status of Jackson County’s activities regarding COVID-19, including vaccination efforts, or the progress of wildfire recovery efforts, you might want to listen in. Due to in-person meeting concerns, the Board’s work sessions and staff meetings are held via Zoom. The easiest way to access the county’s Zoom link is to go to the calendar on Jackson County main webpage (<https://jacksoncountyor.org>) and click on the specific upcoming meeting. That will take you to the meeting’s information including a link to the meeting’s agenda. At the bottom of the agenda is the meeting’s Zoom link.

I would also note that recordings of previous work sessions and staff meetings are archived and are usually available within a day or so after the meeting takes place. The recordings archive can be found at (<https://jacksoncountyor.org/Board-of-Commissioners/Meeting-Audio-Recordings>).

Lastly, Margie Peterson, Barbara Klein and I have continued our discussions with Commissioners Dyer, Roberts, and Dotterer about transparency of the decision-making process and the disclosure of more information regarding action items on their regular Board meeting agendas. While progress has been slowed by their time demands related to COVID-19 and wildfire recovery efforts as well as our own time commitments and the holidays, our conversations have been positive and continue to move forward.

## Climate Action Update

By Shirley Weathers, Climate Change Coordinator

### Jordan Cove LNG and Pacific Connector Gas Pipeline (JC/PC) Project

Lots to report since the last issue. First, the long-awaited [decision](#) by the federal Department of Commerce on Oregon's objection to Jordan Cove's Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) certification came down in favor of Oregon on February 8! This makes two key state permit strikes against the project's ability to be constructed. The first strike happened on January 19, when the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) [rejected](#) project owner Pembina's charge that Oregon waived its authority to issue the Section 401 Water Quality Permit. That means that Oregon's denial of that important permit stands, too. Despite FERC's flawed authorizations of the Jordan Cove LNG and export facilities and Pacific Connector Pipeline in March 2020, the [Order](#) nonetheless mandates that all required permits must be obtained or construction can't begin. Pembina has been steadily losing ground on that score. In fact, they haven't had a victory since then. The LWVRV and three other local Leagues that have been collaboratively opposing Jordan Cove over the years (Coos, Umpqua, and Klamath) wrote a letter to the Governor and Attorney General Rosenblum earlier this month, thanking both for their defense of Oregon against this harmful project and for the diligent and competent work of their staffs on which their decisions are based.

While not the only factors, these permitting latest two losses are central to serious negative indicators in the Canadian company's [Quarter 4 Report](#). Pembina was forced to take a C\$350 million write-down on the project, as well as to reframe their previously optimistic public messaging about it. "In light of current regulatory and political uncertainty, Pembina recognized an impairment in its investment in Jordan Cove and is evaluating the path forward." Financial and fossil fuel sites are taking note of all of this with headlines such as "[Pembina 'sadly' can no longer predict when Jordan Cove LNG will be built in US](#)" and "[Pembina eyes near-term Canada opportunities after US LNG project challenges](#)." One [site](#) observed flatly, "Jordan Cove has suffered too many regulatory defeats." They have not thrown in the towel, but their pathway forward looks at least improbable at this point.

Returning to the CZMA decision, it also exemplifies the dramatic and horribly overdue shift in respect for tribal communities at the federal level. JCEP officials' failure to deal appropriately with Native American leaders has been noted by the League and others over the years, but in upholding Oregon's denial of the Coastal Zone Management Act certification, the [decision](#) specifically noted that the project developer had fallen far short of its obligations to consider impacts on cultural and historical tribal resources. "[E]ach of the responding tribes noted their disappointment with the degree to which they had received government-to-government consultations," as is required under tribal sovereignty agreements. Then on February 18, Governor Brown [wrote](#) to the new FERC Chair, Richard Glick, requesting that the agency "provide for meaningful consultation with Oregon's federally recognized Tribes regarding the Jordan Cove Energy Project," including inviting any Oregon Tribe to be a signatory to the project's Section 106 Programmatic Agreement. Heretofore, FERC has offered only the lesser "concurring party" status to tribes. Brown indicated that this and other prior actions fall short of appropriate and meaningful government-to-government relationship with the tribes.

## Health Care Action Updates by Bill Walsh

The Oregon House And Senate Health Care Committees have been working, except for a few Snow and No Power days. You can get bill-specific health care information by reading the weekly LWVOR Legislative report ([here](#)). Health Care is under Social Policy, and contact me if you have questions, [walsh.weathers@gmail.com](mailto:walsh.weathers@gmail.com).

I hereby make a health care reform prediction: [SJR 12](#), the HOPE Amendment, will pass the Senate and House this year and will be on the 2022 ballot for voters (barring walkouts by disgruntled Senators and Representatives). Senate Joint Resolution 12 is a simple bill that calls for an addition to the Oregon State Constitution. Here is the wording:

SECTION 47. (1) It is the obligation of the state to ensure that every resident of Oregon has access to cost-effective, clinically appropriate, and affordable health care as a fundamental right.

(2) The obligation of the state described in subsection (1) of this section must be balanced against the public interest in funding public schools and other essential public services, and any remedy arising from an action brought against the state to enforce the provisions of this section may not interfere with the balance described in this subsection.

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## Nominating Committee Updates – You’ve Got Talent (so share it with LWVRV) by Bill Walsh, Chair

We are intensifying our search for LWVRV members who are willing to volunteer to take leadership positions in our League. Specifically:

**Historian:** Acts as a collector of print articles, photos, event flyers, social media, and such items relating to the LWVRV, and organizes items for League archives. Present Historian, Nancy Swan, will mentor the new person. (Olena Black is willing to store Archives, but not organize them). Coordinates with Web Master to provide historical content to web page. Writes occasional Voters Voice newsletter articles and coordinates with the Oregon Historical Society when appropriate. Reports to the Board when requested. Historian is not automatically a Board member, although the option is open, if they so desire.

**Co-Hospitality Host:** Works with present Hospitality Host, Shiena Polehn to greet new members and acts as host to League meetings and events. Monitors members overall well-being and sends sympathy cards and/or marks other significant events in their lives. Supervises coffee/drinks and food availability for meetings and events. Participates in League phone tree activities.

**Publicity:** Helps develop and manage media contact list to include print, TV, radio, and social media sources. Links with League web site, Facebook page, and coordinates with Board and Action Committees to publicize events. Helps draft press releases and Letters to the Editor (LTE) on behalf of LWVRV. Fosters positive community relations. Present Publicity person, Bill Walsh, will mentor new person.

**Board openings:** Members who want to help with League Leadership activities are encouraged to volunteer to become a Board member by contacting the Nominating Committee. Nominations will go before the full membership for a vote at the May Annual Meeting. Term is two years and can be renewed.

Nominating Committee: Jackie Clary, Kathleen Donham, Shirley Weathers, Sue Roberts, Bill Walsh, Chair.

## New Members



**Welcome to all of our newest members!**

- Elizabeth (Lisa) Medway
- Jaqueline Rosen
- Roger Schnoes

We look forward to seeing you at our next Zoom meeting!

Again, welcome to our new recruits!

Jackie Clary  
Membership Chair

Contact membership committee persons at [membership@lwvroquevalley.org](mailto:membership@lwvroquevalley.org)

<b>Membership Application</b>	
Name _____	<u>Areas of Interest:</u>
Address _____	◇ Campaign finance    ◇ Local Government
City _____	◇ Education            ◇ Newsletter
Zip _____ Phone _____	◇ Election Issues       ◇ Climate Change
Email _____	◇ Redistricting        ◇ National Issues
Single membership — \$65.00    Spouse/student—\$32.50	◇ Observer Corps       ◇ Voter Services
May we publish your information in the LWVRV Directory?    Y    N	◇ Healthcare Issues
Send check /application to P.O. Box 8555 Medford OR 97501	◇ Environment
Would you like a phone call reminder about meetings?    Yes    No	

## LWVRV Calendar

### March

- Thursday 11 Monthly members meeting, 11:30 AM/The Informed Voter & Citizen Advocate
- Thursday 18 Board Meeting, 10:30 AM
- Saturday 27 Newsletter submissions due

### April

- Thursday 8 Monthly members meeting, 11:30 AM
- Thursday 15 Board Meeting, 10:30
- Friday 19 Special Election voter pamphlets mailed
- Tuesday 27 Newsletter submissions due
- Tuesday 27 Voter registration deadline
- Friday 30 Special Election ballots mailed

### **May 18th is the Special Election**

If you are reading this newsletter on-line, maybe you don't need a mailed paper copy. Call the newsletter editor at 541-830-0602 if you would prefer *not* to get the newsletter by U.S. Mail, or leave a note at [newsletter@lwvroguevalley.org](mailto:newsletter@lwvroguevalley.org) .

You should also be receiving newsletters by email from State and National. For membership application, go to <http://lwvroguevalley.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/MembershipApplication501c3AsOf20190725.pdf>

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