

Black leadership group active in region

By Jim Cornelius
Editor in Chief

Riccardo Waites was moved to act by the May 25 death of George Floyd in Minnesota at the hands of police officer Derek Chauvin. The incident, which was captured on phone footage by bystanders, sparked protests across the nation and now across the globe. Some of those protests were marred by rioting and looting.

Waites is seeking constructive action for constructive change through the founding of the Central Oregon Black Leadership Assembly. The Assembly has figured prominently in rallies in Bend and Redmond, and has been included on the citizens advisory committee that will seek a replacement for Bend Police Chief Jim Porter, who is retiring.

“I started this Assembly the day I saw the video of George Floyd,” said Waites, who is the father of two daughters and a 20-year resident of Bend. “I literally cried as I watched the video. It made me think, what generation is this going to stop so they (his children) don’t feel the pain I’m feeling.”

Waites has significant goals for the organization beyond the activism of the moment. He hopes “to unite every black person in America” and help build black-owned business as a foundation for genuine equality in American society.

Waites, a U.S. Navy submariner veteran lived in major metropolitan areas and came to Bend from Las Vegas at the suggestion of his brother. Like so many who have come here, he was seeking a place to be rooted, a safe and welcoming place to raise a family.

“I took a trip out here for a week to see what’s going on, and I just fell in love with the place,” he said. “When I got here in 2000, people waved at me and they didn’t even know me.”

The experience of living in Central Oregon and starting his own business here has been positive — yet he acknowledges that he is living in a place with very few people of color, and that does have an impact.

“My daughters are definitely a lot safer in Bend, Oregon,” he said. “It’s hard for them not to see people who look like them.”

Waites told *The Nugget* that he has been “pulled over for driving” when people in Bend neighborhoods called police.

He wanted to convey a message to Central Oregon.

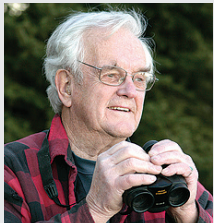
“Don’t be afraid of the Assembly... we’re a peaceful organization.”

He said that “the Assembly is for black people because we’re the most oppressed right now.” However, he noted, support memberships are available to anyone.

Waites said he is currently focused on Bend, Redmond and Prineville, but, he said, I will eventually get out to Sisters.” He foresees a role in Sisters schools.

“I’m definitely going to get with all the local school systems and try to get them to understand more black history, beyond slavery and Martin Luther King, Jr., so they understand how important black people were to creating this country and how we contributed,” he said.

For more information visit <https://mycoba.com>.



Tales from a Sisters Naturalist

by Jim Anderson

Pandora moths are back

When I rolled into Bend on my Harley in 1951 I didn’t know a Pandora moth from a monarch butterfly. It wasn’t until 1986 that they both entered my life, but the first to arrive was the moth; the monarchs came later when my wife, Sue, started monitoring the butterflies at Lava Beds National Monument south of Klamath Falls.

During the summer of that year the state highway department had to begin sanding Highway 97 south of Bend because of motor vehicles smashing big, fat Pandora moth caterpillars trying to cross the highway, causing the pavement to get as slick as snot on a doorknob.

Right this minute — based on the phone calls and emails I’ve received — there’s a whole bunch of these moths wandering all over the forests of our area.

They’ve reached their maximum size as caterpillars, quietly pigging out on pine tree needles the last year, and are now down from their forest café looking for a place to bury themselves in the earth where

they will undergo what I call the “Miracle of Nature,” aka metamorphosis.

Just think, that fat and juicy slug-like animal will bury itself in the soil, weave a silken nightshirt (cocoon) and change into another animal. What gets me is the caterpillar doesn’t die.

The life that’s in it is transferred to the new animal that will emerge from the cocoon. But unlike it’s predecessor, the caterpillar, the new animal has three body parts: head, thorax and abdomen, plus sex organs to reproduce, wings to fly, a different breathing mechanism, but no chewing mouth.

Anyway, if things go as the moth planned, next summer (or the one after, depending on weather) there will be adult Pandora moths all over the place, flying around the night lights and roosting on the walls of our buildings during the day.

The beneficiaries of this bounty are the predators that eat them, such as squirrels, martens, and a number of birds. However, there’s just enough yellow on the caterpillar to warn birds they may not taste very good, and might even make them sick.

Then there’s the parasites. If you don’t like the idea of caterpillars eating your pine tree needles, please don’t go out and buy a bunch of chemicals. There are a host of parasites that just love to lay their eggs in the caterpillars and they take a pretty good toll, and using chemicals will kill the predators and parasites as well.

Bats will think they have died and gone to heaven with all those delicious moths flying all over the place, and you’ll have something to entertain you if you have your supper out on the back deck.



PHOTO BY TED SCHROEDER

Pandora moth caterpillar.

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