

AWARENESS: Activists seek to call attention to racial justice

Continued from page 3

past two hundred plus years disproportionately harm people of color. It is not only our constitutional right to speak out against this system but also our duty.”

Molly Jones is another Sisters resident who has been active with the group in trying to raise local awareness of issues relating to racial inequality.

“Our town has a lot of tourism traffic. I feel it’s our duty as a community to make sure all people who visit and live in our town are safe, valued, and respected here,” Jones said. “By having weekly rallies and weekly conversations our community is continuing to discuss and bring attention to inequity and racism in our town and work towards solutions.”

Oregon has a rather dark history when it comes to issues of race (*see related story, this page*). As recently as 2002, in an Oregon referendum, 29 percent of Oregon voters opposed removing racist language from Oregon’s Constitution. Opposition was greatest in counties on the east side of the Cascades, which serves to underscore Jones and Fisher’s concern about raising awareness here.

“At the first rally I attended in Sisters,” Jones said, “I engaged in conversations with folks who objected to the Black Lives Matter movement. It’s within these difficult conversations that our community has the power to change. We are a small town, we know our neighbors; we can’t go to the store without running into someone we know. Those are the exact ways our community has the power to change.

“We can’t hide from the inequity and racism that happen right here in Sisters. We have the power to create an inclusive and safe community for all. I urge all of you to continue listening, learning, and showing up for the Black Lives Matter movement and advocating for social justice right here in our community.”

Fisher says that public feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

“I’m getting a lot of love out here,” she said. “People are supportive for the most part.”

She is a bit puzzled by the occasional obscenities and

middle fingers, though, which she says are invariably linked to pro-Trump political rants. She wonders if these people really do oppose equality or actually believe that Black lives do not matter.

Occasionally, someone will argue that all lives matter.

“Of course that’s true,” she says, “but the importance of white lives is taken for granted in our society, without the realization that Black lives are simultaneously being marginalized.”

Further information about the group can be found on Facebook at Sisters Fight Against Racial Inequality. They define themselves as: “A group dedicated to fighting racial inequality in Sisters, Oregon, and beyond.” The group attracted more than 100 followers. Information on how to participate, volunteer, or staff the demonstration corner can be found on the page.

“For too long, I was silent,” Fisher said, “but I can’t be anymore. I have to stand up and do something for my own ethics and morality.”

“Our town has a lot of tourism traffic. I feel it’s our duty as a community to make sure all people who visit and live in our town are safe, valued, and respected here.”
— Molly Jones

Oregon’s history steeped in racism

By **Craig F. Eisenbeis**
Correspondent

Many Oregonians have the impression that racism is not an issue in Oregon, and there are reasons for that. Oregon ranks 42nd among the states in its percentage of Black population, with only 2 to 3 percent.

Many Oregonians, especially in rural areas, seldom even see a Black person; and it turns out that there is a reason for that, too. In fact, it was by design.

In order to avoid the racial turmoil afflicting the rest of the country, Oregon’s founders sought to avoid all that fuss by simply creating what some envisioned as an all-white utopia. So, in 1844, the first exclusion law was passed which made it illegal to be Black in Oregon, excluding “any Negro or Mulatto” from the territory. Violators were subject to penalties such as fines and periodic flogging. When Oregon was admitted to the Union in 1859, Oregon was the only state with a Black exclusion law.

Although such laws were rendered invalid by the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1868, they remained on Oregon’s books until 1926, when they were formally removed during that year’s election.

Still, 37 percent of Oregon voters voted against rescinding those racist laws. This was at a time when the Ku Klux Klan had established a significant presence in the state, and some historians claim that Oregon had the highest per-capita KKK membership of any state in the Union.

Blacks were not the only target of Oregon’s white supremacists. While there has been much recent publicity surrounding Tulsa’s massacre of its Black population in 1921, Oregon had its own racist massacre in 1887, when a gang of whites murdered 34 Chinese gold miners in eastern Oregon. In spite of multiple witnesses and confessions, no one was ever punished for the crime. The killing site on the Snake River is now named Chinese Massacre Cove.

In 1869, the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was drafted and

passed, giving Black men (all races, actually) the right to vote. The amendment was ratified by the requisite number of states and took effect the very next year. Oregon was not one of the states to ratify; and it would take Oregon 90 years to catch up and formally ratify that amendment, an action which did not take place until Oregon’s Centennial in 1959.

Oregon laws restricting intermarriage and real estate ownership continued to affect Blacks, Asians, and Native Americans into the 1950s and ’60s.

As recently as 2002, Oregon voters were asked to remove racist language from Oregon’s Constitution. While the measure passed in all of Oregon’s 36 counties, the amendment was still opposed by 29 percent of Oregon’s voters. The counties where the vote was closest were all on the east side of the Cascades.



LOCALLY-OWNED

Make us your natural & organic foods destination!

- Large organic produce selection
- Huge organic & natural selection storewide
- Meat cut & ground fresh daily
- Huge bulk-foods department
- All your favorite local brands & items
- Only 20 minutes from Sisters
- Proud to be 100% locally owned

Food4Less

Located in the Cascade Village Shopping Center, Bend
Open every day, 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Isolated shopping hour: 6 to 7 a.m.



YEAR-ROUND
FIREWOOD SALES
— KINDLING —
SISTERS FOREST PRODUCTS
541-410-4509
SistersForestProducts.com



SISTERS SALOON
— & RANCH GRILL —

OUR DINING ROOM IS NOW OPEN!
Sun-Thurs 11-9 • Fri-Sat 11-9:30
★ Menu at SistersSaloon.net ★
541-549-RIBS | 190 E. Cascade Ave.



BLAKE & SONS

CLEANING SERVICES

Windows • Screens • Gutters
Residential, Rentals & Commercial Cleaning

FREE ESTIMATES!
Call or text Jeff Blake
at 541-420-3020

19 YEARS EXPERIENCE • INSURED, LICENSED & BONDED

HIGH DESERT MUSEUM  Smithsonian Affiliates

59800 SOUTH HIGHWAY 97 | BEND, OREGON 97702
541-382-4754 | HIGHDESERTMUSEUM.ORG



INFINITE MOMENT

BURNING MAN ON THE HORIZON

Explore the art and culture of Burning Man.

NEW EXHIBIT
OPEN THROUGH JANUARY 3, 2021

"The Phoenix and the Butterfly" by artist Swig Miller. Photo by Jill Rosell.

Quality Truck-mounted CARPET CLEANING
Quality Cleaning 16 years in Sisters!
Reasonable Prices
— Credit Cards Accepted —



ENVIROTECH
541-771-5048
Licensed • Bonded • Insured • CCB#181062
RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL



ELITE ROOFING LLC

- Re-Roof & New Construction
- Composite, Metal, Flat & Cedar Shake Products
- Free Estimates
- Transferable Warranties
- 10-Year Workmanship Guarantee

Family Owned & Operated for 20 Years
541-526-5143
ccb#203769