

**NOVEL IDEA:**  
2021 selection to be unveiled December 5

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person and seeing the reaction from guests when the book is announced, but rest assured, we are putting forth our best efforts to deliver incredible online programming,” said Deschutes Public Library’s Programs Supervisor Liz Goodrich. “A Novel Idea is one of our favorite programs, and the community’s too. We have interactive elements to bring the event to viewers in all its glory to make it an unforgettable year.”

A Novel Idea began in 2004 with David James Duncan’s “The River Why” and 400 community participants attending a handful of programs. After a quick pivot to move the program online in March 2020, with Anne Griffin’s “When All Is Said” — including a live-streamed event featuring the author in Ireland — organizers saw their highest engagement numbers ever, with more than 800 viewers tuning in for the live event. In addition, more than 9,000 people viewed “A Novel Idea” programs online leading up to the main author event.

By transitioning A Novel Idea to the digital realm, Goodrich notes the library has the ability to reach people throughout the county, whether it is their first year or 18th participating in the project.

“Last spring when we transitioned to online programming, Deschutes County readers continued to show support for A Novel Idea by turning out for virtual programs in record numbers,” Goodrich said. “We believe that A Novel Idea provides a platform to understand one another a little bit better by reading, exploring, and discussing a book together.”

Programming for A Novel Idea begins on Saturday, April 3, and culminates with the author’s live-streamed event on Sunday, May 2. All programs are presented online and free of charge thanks to the support of the Deschutes Public Library Foundation. Readers can reserve a library copy immediately following the reveal on December 5. All local bookstores will have copies available for purchase.

For more information about this or other library programs, visit the library website at [www.deschuteslibrary.org](http://www.deschuteslibrary.org) and the Foundation website at [www.dpl.foundation.org](http://www.dpl.foundation.org). People with disabilities needing accommodations (alternative formats, seating or auxiliary aides) should contact Goodrich at 541-312-1032.

**ELECTION:** Blum, Letz, and Ross eager to serve Sisters

*Continued from page 1*

have gotten themselves a really dedicated and hard-working group of City councilors,” said Fisher. Cobb admitted, “I had a hard time voting for only three of the five candidates; the two to exclude sometimes included me... The voters of Sisters wisely selected the best candidates.”

The two women not elected noted as a positive the uptick in citizens volunteering to serve in elected positions as well as on boards and committees.

“I ran to do the job but also to influence others to become engaged. Looks like Sisters folks were already thinking similarly because within a month after I became a candidate, we soon had four more. Also, I recently learned that the applications for boards and committees are breaking records in local participation this month,” said Cobb.

They both plan to volunteer for other public positions.

Fisher indicated, “I have applied to be part of the Citizens Advisory Committee for the Comprehensive Plan update and the Sisters Country Vision Implementation Team.”

She is confident she will find a way to make sure her voice is heard in Sisters.

Both Blum and Letz shared that one of their priorities for Council to address in the very near future is planning for and practicing

wildfire safety in Sisters.

“I’d like to address wildfire safety as soon as possible. We owe it to our fellow Oregonians who lost their homes and lives to learn from their tragedies and prevent a large-scale disaster from impacting our community,” said Letz.

Blum concurred, “I’m most concerned about how we prioritize making Sisters a wildfire-resistant community. When I look at what wildfire has done to other small cities in forested areas, I realize we have to do everything we can to prevent that from happening in Sisters.”

Ross and Blum are both concerned with the impact of the pandemic on Sisters.

Ross thinks, “we will face major challenges as a city in the next 18 months as we deal with the impacts of COVID-19 on our business community, schools, and citizen health.”

Along the same line, Blum said, “I see the Council’s main priority is to see that the community gets safely through the pandemic with as little damage to our local businesses as possible.”

Ross is eager to work “with the existing Council, the city manager, and the excellent City staff, as well as community members, as we plan for Sisters’ next 20 years.”

Having been already involved with the Sisters Vision Plan, Blum is “most looking forward to continue implementing the Sisters Community Vision. Through the process of updating the Sisters Comprehensive Plan, we have the opportunity to further develop, in writing, many of the community’s

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– Jennifer Letz

goals for the next 20 years.”

Letz, also focused on the Comprehensive Plan, stated, “Obviously, completing the Comprehensive Plan is going to be a very important and exciting project for the Council in the near term.”

Ross would like to work on improving pedestrian and bicycle safety on city streets, particularly Jefferson, Locust, and Washington. He also hopes to help move forward the Locust/Highway 20 roundabout project. In the area of regulations, he would like to see the City ensure that “Dark Sky” lighting is required on all new construction and enforced in areas where it is required but often ignored.

Letz is looking forward to getting to know more of the City staff, other Council members, and members of

the community.

All three councilors hold very positive views of the city and care about our quality of life.

“Our town is full of creative and engaged people and I’m interested in tapping that energy to maintain Sisters’ quality of life for its citizens and visitors,” said Letz.

Ross said, “Sisters is a community I enjoy — the greetings of folks on the streets, the easy access to services, and the walkability/bicycle friendly nature of the community. I want to work to keep that special feeling as we plan for the future of Sisters.”

“In all the ways that matter, we are a strong and united community. I believe we will look back on the year 2020 and be proud of what we have overcome and been able to achieve as a community,” concluded Blum.

The new Council will be seated in January 2021.

In other local election results, Phil Chang won Position #2 on the Board of Deschutes County Commissioners, Sheriff Shane Nelson was re-elected to serve a second four-year term, and a funding measure for the Deschutes County Library District passed (*see related story, page 6*).

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— Robine B.

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 **Ross Kennedy**  
Principal Broker  
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