

## From The Editor

I've struggled to find the right words to talk about the numerous crisis facing this country, and especially the events of the last two weeks. It's a confusing time, filled with many more questions than answers.

To try and promote better conversation, we've turned to two other publications – *The Other Oregon*, and *High Country News*, for some differing perspectives. The commentary by Nella Mae Parks (see below) was published well before the events of the last two weeks, and offers a view from rural Oregon on how we come back together as a nation. Carl Segerstrom's piece (see front page) provides a recent historical perspective on the growing right-wing extremist movement and its ties to Oregon, the Bundys, and the Malheur Wildlife Refuge incident.

After the Trump presidency, how

do we create unity in our country without first agreeing to some sort of accountability? In Martin Luther King Jr.'s final book, published before his assigation, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?*, and in a speech by the same title, Dr. King pondered these same questions. "Now, we got to get this thing right. What is needed is a realization that power without love is reckless and abusive, and that love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is love correcting everything that stands against love. And this is what we must see as we move on."

Dr. King's words still ring true today as we try to move forward.

Scott Laird  
Editor and Publisher

## What We Need Now: Bridges, Ladders, Imagination

By Nella Mae Parks  
*The Other Oregon*

After a devastating year of COVID, of protests, of the election, what I may be the most tired of is hearing "I just can't understand..."

"I just can't understand why someone would vote for that guy."

"I just can't understand why people wear/don't wear masks."

"I just can't understand why people are protesting/not protesting."

"I just can't understand why people believe that."

Every time I hear someone say, "I just can't understand," I think, "Is your imagination broken?"

### Imagination

Even if we are too frustrated to listen right now, in the privacy of our own minds, we can imagine how the world is not the same for others as it is for us. Without leaving our house or our town, we can see that our own experience in the world is not universal and this is how others come to different conclusions than we do.

If we are able to listen to and believe others when they talk about their lives, we can come to understand and empathize with them. We can understand why or how someone living a different life with different challenges and a different history can find it so important to take to the streets in protest or to vote for someone for whom

we cannot; we can imagine why someone would do the opposite of what we would do.

I have thought a lot this year about what it will take to narrow the divides — both real and perceived — that we face in our country. I have thought a lot about how we can narrow the rural-urban divide in our own state.

I think the only way forward is through, and the only way through is together.

I think we need a national and personal infrastructure project of ladders and bridges.

### Bridges

What I want to see in 2021 is some good, old-fashioned bridge building — between urban and rural; western Oregon and eastern Oregon; young and old; between races; between political parties. But let's not construct a series of "bridges to nowhere." I want bridges from here to a more perfect union and I want people to start crossing them. I know we might have to start with rope bridges that sway and narrow planks that take some guts to cross.

I know we aren't all engineers, but those of us who are called to bridge building must. I want people to uncover their eyes, look for the bridges and start walking them. I un-

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Vernonia's Voice is published on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month.

One year subscription (24 issues) \$35

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