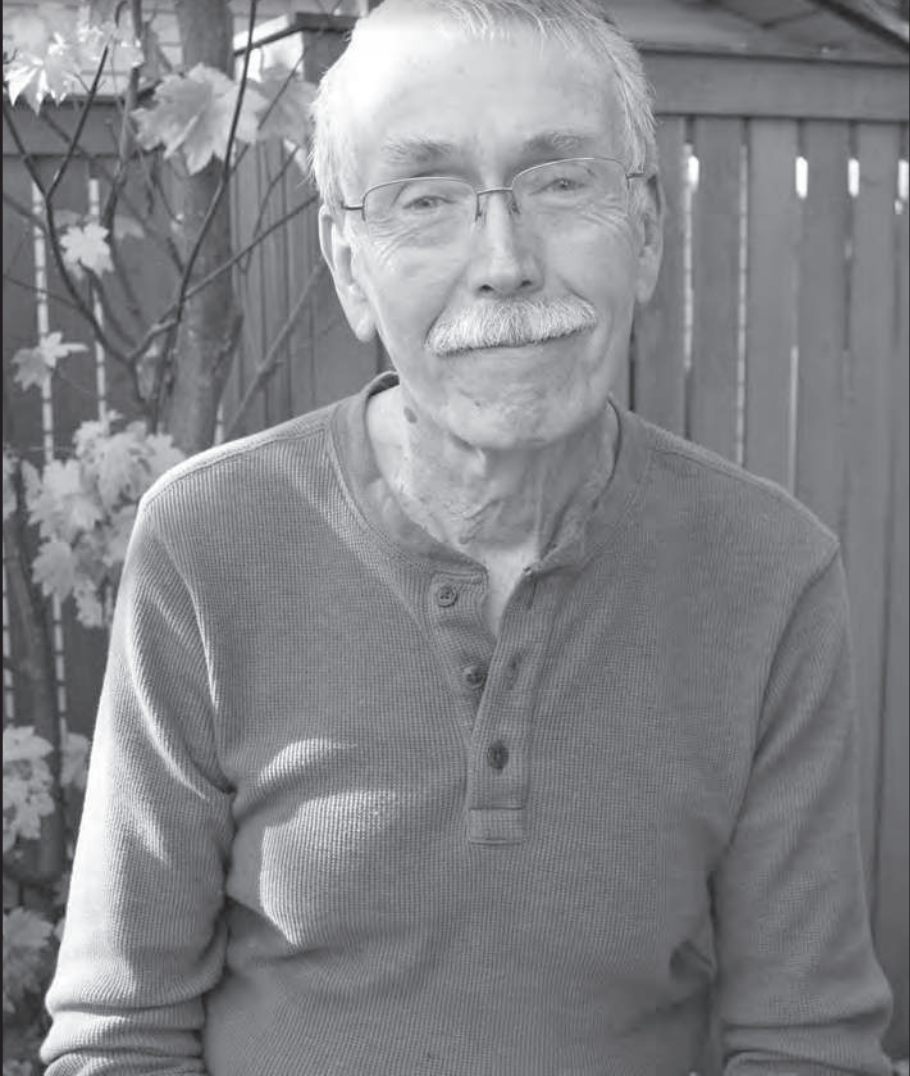


# HAPPENING PEOPLE

BY PAUL NEEVEL



## Ron Wold (revisited)

November 2013: “Our family hobby was rock hunting,” says Ron Wold, who grew up in Beaverton and majored in geology at Amherst. He got a master’s degree at the University of Montana, then came to Eugene to pursue a Ph.D. “After two years, I took a job as a geologist with the Bureau of Land Management,” says Wold, who became a realty specialist in the agency’s Eugene office. “I managed right-of-way agreements on 320,000 acres.” After 30 years of service, he retired in 2004 at age 56. Though he knew at an early age that he was attracted to men, Wold took a conventional path, married a hometown Oregon girl, and had a son, Eric. The marriage lasted five years. Two years later, he met Ken Hinds, an RN at Sacred Heart. “We’ve been together 36 years next month,” he says. “He helped raise my son.” Wold became politically active in the failed 2004 effort to defeat Measure 36, which banned gay marriage before being declared unconstitutional. Wold took part in the 2008 and 2012 Obama campaigns with his own personal project, a voter-registration table, parked outdoors in front of the Eugene Public Library. “I recruited friends to staff it,” he says. “I found that one person can make an impact.”

2018 update: Wold and Hinds were married after the gay marriage ban was overruled in 2014. “We registered 900 voters in 2008,” Wold recalls. “It went so well, we did it again in 2012, 2014 and 2016. We do it in a non-partisan fashion.” This year, the library table was fully staffed by volunteers six days a week for eight weeks preceding the election. It also traveled to community events such as Saturday Market and Eugene Sunday Streets. “Overall, we collected over 1,500 registration cards,” he says. “It’s fun explaining to newcomers how the Oregon vote-by-mail system works.”

**A mind is** responsible  
for the traffic light, the blood bank, ice cream,  
peanut butter, the doorknob, the microphone, the elevator,  
clothes dryer, lawn mower, pacemaker, the typewriter, guided  
missile, mailbox, the air conditioner, automatic transmission, curtain  
rod, baby carriage, lawn sprinkler, fountain pen, dust pan, the hand  
stamp, first open-heart surgery, cataract laser, fire extinguisher, doorstop,  
home security camera, the golf tee, fire escape, potato chip, food preservation,  
synthesized cortisone, the guitar, railroad telegraphy, envelope seal, printing press,  
bicycle frame, rocket catapult, insect destroyer gun, ice cream scoop, window cleaner,  
laser fuels, folding chair, gas mask, mop, refrigerator, pressing comb, urinalysis  
machine, door lock, electric cutoff switch, telephone transmitter, stair-climbing wheel-  
chair, hairbrush, egg beater, eye protector, electric lamp bulb, biscuit cutter, chamber  
commode, almanac, horse shoe, lunch pail, motor, lantern, key chain, furniture caster,  
ironing board, sugar-refining system, lemon squeezer, portable weighing scales,  
wrench, airplane propeller, ore bucket, steam boiler, portable x-ray machine, cotton  
chopper fertilizer, street sweeper, cattle-roping apparatus, spark plug, galoshes, casket-  
lowering device, clothes wringer, disrail car coupling, riding saddles, and so on  
and so on. The list is endless. Indeed, it’s time to stop and celebrate the fact  
that each and every one of the wonderful innovations mentioned here came  
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to be created. And that possibility is  
**a terrible thing to waste.**

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