

Candidate picks for Bend schools

There may be worse incidents of candidates refusing to answer questions and attend debates. But the worst example we have in Bend is in the current races for Bend-La Pine School Board.

Let's make it clear right up front who you should vote for Bend schools: Carrie McPherson Douglass, Marcus LeGrand, Shirley Olson and Janet Sarai Llerandi.

The League of Women Voters held a debate. McPherson Douglass, LeGrand, Olson and Llerandi attended. Their opponents did not.

The Bulletin's editorial board attempted to interview all the candidates running for Bend-La Pine Schools. We had no trouble interviewing McPherson Douglass, LeGrand, Olson and Llerandi. The other four did not respond or responded and then did nothing.

The Bulletin's news reporting staff attempted to interview all the candidates. McPherson Douglass, LeGrand, Olson and Llerandi all responded. Maria Lopez-Dauenhauer, who is running against Douglass, and Wendy Imel, who is running against Marcus LeGrand, also responded. Gregg Henton and Jon Haffner did not.

We should note that one candidate appearing on the ballot has said he has withdrawn from the race, Cab Burge.

Why have Lopez-Dauenhauer, Imel, Henton and Haffner been less than committed to making themselves available to voters than others? We can speculate, though we don't know

We can tell you what it means for voters. Voters don't know enough about who they are and what they stand for. On the school board, you have to be responsive to voters. You have to make yourself available to constituents. They have demonstrated they are not as interested in that. Does it mean that if they are elected they would not engage with constituents? No. But you have four excellent choices who have been forthcoming about who they are and what they stand for.

McPherson Douglass is an incumbent. On a board with a lot of turnover, that matters. It is far from her only qualification. She works with school boards across the country on making them function better. She was born and raised here, which helps. She understands business and finance. Douglass worked hard to reopen schools and keep children and school staff safe.

That required working collaboratively, not diktat. And she is committed to ensuring the district serves all students well.

LeGrand is Black and has worked for the last 11 years helping students from a counselor's perspective, building relationships and helping them overcome barriers. He is the college and career success coach at Central Oregon Community College, and a board member of The Father's Group — that's a Bend nonprofit primarily led by Black fathers. He is ideally positioned to know what makes a student ready for college and or other advanced training and how to work with students who might be slipping through the cracks.

Olson spent her career in education — 38 years as school administrator and school consultant. She said one thing her experience has taught her is that the members of the school board won't necessarily have the answers. They need to ask the right questions. They need to listen to the community. She is very concerned with the loss of learning that students have experienced over the pandemic and wants to work with the district to overcome that.

Llerandi is Latino and works as an administrator for two local education nonprofits Better Together and the Early Learning Hub of Central Oregon. She is also the executive director of Mecca Bend, a Latino-focused nonprofit organization. Llerandi is the parent of two Latino students who are experiencing many of the challenges that other Latino students are facing. She said there is no foolproof way for the district to ensure it serves all students. She would work to ensure it does.

McPherson Douglass, LeGrand, Olson and Llerandi for Bend-La Pine Schools.

And to sum up other endorsements in some local races, we have already endorsed:

- Martha Lawler for the Deschutes Public Library Board.
- Nathan Hovekamp, Zavier Borja and Deb Schoen for board of the Bend Park & Recreation District.

Whatever you may decide, please vote.

Spend aid money wisely

Deschutes County commissioners may get as much as \$38 million in federal relief money to spend — the first \$19 million by May 11 and the second half coming later in the month.

How should they spend it?

They can't spend it on whatever they want. The initial federal guidelines allow spending on:

- Responding to the public health challenges of the pandemic.
- Funding government services that may have been reduced by the

pandemic.

- Spending on water, sewer and broadband infrastructure.
- Giving premium pay to county employees providing essential work during the pandemic or providing grants to employers whose employees provide essential work during the pandemic.

More guidelines on the spending may come. But the commissioners will surely listen to your ideas. It's on the agenda for Wednesday's meeting. You can email them at board@deschutes.org or call and leave a voicemail at (541) 385-1734.



My Nickel's Worth

McPherson Douglass and LeGrand for Bend schools

My ballot arrived on Saturday, was eagerly filled out and is already in the mailbox to be picked up on Monday! If you aren't as obsessive as I am, and are still wondering who to vote for, I want to strongly encourage you to support two amazing candidates for the Bend-La Pine School Board: Carrie McPherson Douglass and Marcus LeGrand. They bring extensive experience in education and each has spent a substantial number of years in the community. (Carrie graduated from Bend High School!) They have proven track records and have made significant investments — in both time and energy — in numerous projects and activities that benefit this community and our children.

Carrie and Marcus are incredibly hardworking, passionate and approachable people who try to build partnerships and create win-win situations. I know them personally and can heartily say that we will be a better community with them on the school board!

— Bruce Abernethy, Bend

Help the people who live here

Kudos to Bill Eddie! Finally someone had the guts to write in a guest column in The Bulletin about how I feel/hope a lot of us Bendites are thinking — that someone needs to jump on the City Council/Visitors Bureau to stop 1) promoting Bend as the place to visit/live, and 2) giving what looks like carte blanche to builders to destroy what open areas we have left to build homes/apartments, etc. wherever and whenever they can. Example, the closing of River's Edge Golf Course, which will house more and more million-dol-

lar homes, the buildup of at least 100 homes, etc. on the east side, bordering Deschutes Market Road and Butler Market Road and more. When will all this stop? Or will we eventually become conjoined with La Pine to the south, Powell Butte to the east, Redmond to the north and Sisters to the west and beyond? A lot of us won't be alive to witness this sprawl, but until then are there not enough Bendites who are willing to be up in arms about what's happening to our area? Certainly there are some of you willing to fight for keeping more open spaces! Reread Bill Eddie's column in the Sunday Bulletin. It can't be explained any better than that!

— Clarissa Jurgensen, Bend

McPherson Douglass for Bend schools

Katie and I have been residents of Bend for 47 years. During that time we have always exercised our right to vote. We pay close attention to local, state and federal elections. We have always supported our schools, and, during these times of uncertainty, it is extremely important to ensure we have the leadership on our school board that provides our children, our teachers and our community with the support necessary to give all of us a viable path going forward.

Carrie McPherson Douglass is the right choice for Bend-La Pine School Board director, Zone 1. She is a tireless worker, compassionate, knowledgeable and committed. She cares deeply about our kids and brings all the tools required to serve the board in a capacity that will enhance the success of Bend-La Pine Schools.

We have known Carrie for all of her life and thank her for the pos-

itive contributions she has made to our community. Please join us in voting for her reelection to the board.

— Larry and Katie Kimmel, Bend

Vora for Bend parks

Robin Vora has served as a colleague with me on the Bend Historic Landmarks Commission for the past five years. In that time the commission has made decisions regarding some contentious building projects in the Historic District. Robin has always been prepared for these decisions by collecting the facts of each project, listening to all the pros and cons of the proposals, knowing and understanding the role of the commission and applying the letter and spirit of city ordinance and state and federal guidelines in a fair and problem-solving manner. In my role as chair of the commission, I have found him cooperative, businesslike, and though sometimes we disagree, easy to work with.

I know Robin serves the community in more ways than the Landmarks Commission. For instance, he also served on the Bend Urban Renewal Advisory Board and serves on the Deschutes Soil and Water Conservation District Board. In addition to the government agencies, he is also a volunteer for the Tower Theatre. No one serves Bend more than Robin Vora. He would make an excellent member of the board of directors of the Bend Park & Recreation District. I urge all Bend voters to elect Robin Vora to the park board. This is a personal endorsement of Robin Vora and not to be construed as anything more than an expression of my regard for Robin.

— Jerry Sebestyen, Bend

Letters policy

We welcome your letters. Letters should be limited to one issue, contain no more than 250 words and include the writer's signature, phone number and address for verification. We edit letters for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject poetry, personal attacks, form letters, letters submitted elsewhere and those appropriate for other sections of The Bulletin. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days.

Guest columns

Your submissions should be between 550 and 650 words; they must be signed; and they must include the writer's phone number and address for verification. We edit submissions for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject those submitted elsewhere. Locally submitted columns alternate with national columnists and commentaries. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days.

How to submit

Please address your submission to either My Nickel's Worth or Guest Column and mail, fax or email it to The Bulletin. Email submissions are preferred.

Email: letters@bendbulletin.com

Write: My Nickel's Worth/Guest Column

P.O. Box 6020
Bend, OR 97708

Fax: 541-385-5804

Equal access to standardized sex ed is essential for youth

BY LILIANA CABRERA

With some young people returning to in-person school and others still distance learning, education across the country remains wildly inconsistent. That's why Planned Parenthood Columbia Willamette is recognizing Sex Ed for All Month, an urgent campaign to ensure all students have equitable access to truly comprehensive sexuality education — developmentally appropriate, medically accurate and inclusive.

All young people deserve access to the information and resources they need to protect their health, fulfill their goals and make the best decisions for themselves about sex and relationships — free from shame, judgment or stigma.

We know that access to sex education and sexual and reproductive health care services is critical to safe and healthy teens. The overwhelming

majority of people agree: Young people should have access to sex education.

Unfortunately, too many students in the United States aren't getting the life skills they need. Too often, the sex education young people receive — if they do — is based on who they are and where they live. Sex ed varies significantly based on state laws, school district policies, teacher training and other factors. This leads to inequities in the breadth and depth of sex education from classroom to classroom.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, fewer than half of all high schools and only 1 in 5 middle schools are teaching the "essential" topics, which include HIV, STI and pregnancy prevention.

According to the Guttmacher Institute, only 30 states and the District of Columbia mandate sex education — but with no guarantee that it is medically accurate, age-appropriate

GUEST COLUMN



Cabrera

or unbiased. Only nine states and the District of Columbia are actually providing positive, LGBTQ-inclusive sex education curricula; most sex education programs leave queer youth

out of the conversation.

Oregon is fortunate to be among those few states with a strong sex education law, but because of uneven local policies, funding and training, the quality of programs varies, if they exist at all.

Let's be clear: Sex education IS education. It gives young people the knowledge and skills they need for a lifetime of good health: how to think

critically about the world, practice good allyship across identities, advocate for themselves and love themselves for who they are. It helps them build healthy relationships and have the opportunity to practice good communication skills before they become sexually active.

Young people deserve culturally specific sex education that recognizes all of who they are and all that they could be. This means ensuring they are seen for their unique experiences with identity, sexuality, relationships and culture — particularly those in rural areas; youth with lower incomes; Black, Latino, Indigenous and other people of color; LGBTQ youth; immigrant youth; and youth with disabilities.

As the nation's largest provider of sex education, Planned Parenthood is committed to making sex education more accessible, more equitable and more inclusive — for all. Our growing

library of YouTube videos for young people model healthy communication about consent, safer sex and STIs. Online tools at PlannedParenthood.org can supplement existing programs by helping teens, parents and educators to better access the information and resources they need.

Sex Ed for All Month affirms our commitment to stand with young people. With our partner organizations, Planned Parenthood Columbia Willamette is committed to sexual and reproductive health care, rights and education, and we will continue to provide and advocate for the sex education young people deserve.

Together, we can ensure that all young people have the information and skills they need to lead their healthiest lives.

■ Liliana Cabrera serves as education and outreach coordinator for Planned Parenthood Columbia Willamette's Bend Health Center, PPCWC.org.

Editorials reflect the views of The Bulletin's editorial board, Publisher Heidi Wright, Editor Gerry O'Brien and Editorial Page Editor Richard Coe. They are written by Richard Coe.