



"The Rights Stuff"



An update from the Bonner County Human Rights Task Force

* This used to be the title of the BCHRTF Newsletter. I thought I'd resurrect it.

Let me know what you think!

February, 2019

Add the Words -- We have heard from former State Senator Nicole LeFavour that the effort to add the words "sexual orientation and gender identity" to the list of classes protected under Idaho's existing non-discrimination laws is still alive. The Bonner County Human Rights Task Force has added its name to a list of 35 other organizations urging the legislature for a hearing and passage of a bill to fully include gay and transgender Idahoans in the state Human Rights Act. We will keep you posted about the progress of this effort and ways that we can help to support it.

Reclaim Idaho - You have probably heard-- on February 5, the Idaho Supreme Court ruled that the Initiative to expand Medicaid, overwhelmingly approved by voters, was legal. This defeated the attempt by the Idaho Freedom Foundation to have it declared unconstitutional.

Currently, another challenge has been launched by Republican Senator Mary Souza from CDA, who has proposed a bill that would end Medicaid expansion if the federal funding ratio of 90 percent drops and the Idaho legislature doesn't take action. A Senate panel voted Feb. 11 to hold a hearing on the bill.

Voters authorized Medicaid expansion in November after years of inaction by the Legislature. The expansion will provide access to preventative health care services for about 91,000 low-income Idaho residents.

So-- stay tuned --and you can always check on the latest progress by going to the Reclaim Idaho Facebook page, or www.reclaimidaho.org. The Facebook page has their response to the latest move by Mary Souza to block Medicaid expansion-- and it also has ways to support their efforts if you choose to do that!

A Healthy Environment is a Basic Human Right -- Nancy Gerth recently wrote an Op-Ed piece for the Bonner County Daily Bee making this argument quite eloquently. The BCHRTF is writing its own letter in support of this position. Read Nancy's article at:

www.bonnercountydailybee.com/letters_to_the_editor/20190131/a_healthy_environment_is_basic_human_right

Here is the BCHRTF response:

The Bonner County Human Rights Task Force would like to declare its support for the idea proposed by Nancy Gerth in her January 31 letter that appeared in the Daily Bee. In it she proposed that a healthy environment is a basic human right.

Although it is not specifically stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we agree that many of the rights named in that document are dependent on clean air and water-- an environment that has not been degraded by the actions of human beings.

For example, Article 24 states that everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care..." This is not possible without a healthy environment. As Nancy pointed out, over one million children die each year as a result of air and water pollution alone.

Those who profit most from actions that are destructive to the environment are those with the financial means to escape the effects of such actions-- at least for a time. Millions of others are sickened, and displaced, often with no place to go. This discriminates devastatingly against those with the least means.

The concept of human rights has been evolving for many years. The first written statement goes back to 539 BC. It is still evolving. However, we might be wise to be advised by a statement attributed to Chief Seattle in 1854:

"Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect."

Acknowledging how critical stewardship of our environment is to providing equal rights and opportunity for all would be a further evolution in our understanding of human rights. Let's take that step! A healthy environment is, indeed, a human right.

Grants Available for Human Rights projects and programs:

Do you have any ideas about how to promote awareness and understanding of human rights that will help foster a more inclusive and welcoming community? Do you wish for more racial equity, less discrimination on the basis of race, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity, or on the basis of economic status and mental illness? Do you see a healthy environment as a human right and wish to promote that concept? -- Well, put your creative hats on and come up with some ways that you and your organization could promote these ideas.

The BCHRTF has funds that have been placed with the Idaho Community Foundation-- and the interest earned annually is made available to the community for human rights activities. Non-profits, governmental and education agencies are eligible to apply.

There is a Request for Proposals-- with all the details attached to this email. Check it out!

School levy on March 12:

Once again, it's time to vote on another school levy-- to replace an expiring levy and maintain the level of service that already exists in the schools. Unfortunately, until the State of Idaho is able to come up with a way to fund education, fairly and adequately, we will be voting for levies. Here's a link to a very nice fact sheet.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sx5lHmFDUVdX-YsgZljsk_rBGi8HGoJC/view

Great news from Portland!

Long time friend of the BCHRTF Eric Ward is now the Executive Director of the Western States Center sent this message:

“ I just testified before the Portland Mayor and Commissioners in support of an historic resolution condemning white supremacist, alt-right, and white nationalist groups. The resolution passed unanimously...

Portland is leading the nation by acknowledging the threat-- past and present--posed by white nationalism and taking action to combat it.

The resolution is significant because it affirms the City's commitment to dismantling white supremacy in City policies and practices, and it commits to a critical next action, providing training for City staff to recognize the growing threat of bigoted social movements. ..

White nationalism and white supremacy have been allowed to flourish in our national climate of crisis and division. This is an urgent challenge that we must face as a nation. We hope the leadership that the Portland City Commissioners have taken today can be an example to other communities around the nation.”

In solidarity, Eric K. Ward , Executive Director

Good books for cold days!! Even if you love getting out in the snow to ski or go snow-shoeing-- or just snow-shoveling-- you're bound to want to curl up in a warm place afterwards. Here are some good, human rights related books you might want to consider :

Rising Out of Hatred -- by Eli Saslow (winner of a Pulitzer prize)-- tells the story of Derek Black, the son of one of the leaders of the White Nationalist movement who founded *Stormfront*, the largest racist community on the Internet. Derek's godfather was David Duke, and age 19 he already had a daily radio show regarded as the "leading light" of the White Nationalist movement. Read about the experiences he had that led him to disavow the mantle of white supremacy he was poised to inherit.

A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights -- by Mary Ann Glendon -- tells the dramatic story of the struggle to build, out of the trauma and wreckage of World War II, a document that would ensure it would never happen again. Championed by Eleanor Roosevelt under the aegis of the newly formed United Nations and brought into being by an extraordinary group of men and women who knew, like the framers of the Declaration of Independence, that they were making history. They worked against the clock, the brief window between the end of World War II and the deep freeze of the cold war, to forge the founding document of the modern rights movement.

White Fragility: Why It's so Hard for White People to Talk About Racism --by Robin Diangelo -- This book examines why white progressives can be complicit in the culture of white supremacy without knowing it-- because we believe we are not racist-- and that we treat people the same, regardless of the color of their skin. It's enlightening to realize the ways in which we are part of the problem, and therefore can be part of the solution.

Speaking of books: perhaps you'd like to publish one!

Christine Holbert of Lost Horse Press is hosting a workshop on publishing. Here is her announcement:

LOST HORSE PRESS AND the SANDPOINT LITERARY COLLECTIVE are pleased to announce a PUBLISHING WORKSHOP—Part III in our Winter Creative Writing Series—on 23 February 2019 from 10 AM until 3 PM at the Sandpoint Library Rude Girls Room.

Literary magazine and book editors/publishers— Christopher Howell, founding director of Lynx House Press; Polly Buckingham, editor of *Stringtown* and *Willow Springs* magazines; Jonathan Frey, editor of NIC's *Trestle Creek Review*, Matt Holloway, fiction editor of the *Whitefish Review*, and Christine Holbert, founding director of Lost Horse Press—answer your most pressing questions about publishing in this one-day workshop intended for experienced as well as emerging writers and poets. Topics under discussion will be primarily directed by participants' questions, but will also address various topics of import and interest to writers who intend to publish their writing in regional and national venues.

We hope you can join us for an informative and illuminating discussion. This program is free and open to all writers, but we do require that you register: To register for the Workshop, contact losthorsepress@mindspring.com or 208.255.4410

May you all be safe and warm!!

Brenda Hammond, President,

BCHRTF