



The Bozeman Voter

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Bozeman Area

November, 2019

PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

Rosanne Nash

Around 100 people attended the Oct. 9 Bozeman City Commission and Ballot Initiative Forum at the Bozeman Public Library. It was a lively and informative forum. Our partnership with the Bozeman Business and Professional Women and the Bozeman Public Library on these events has worked very well. I want to thank Sally Maison and Charlene Krygier for helping organize the forum, Sally for moderating the forum, Anne Banks and Linda Thompson for working as timers and Priscilla Dysart for tracking the finances. Sally Maison also moderated a Belgrade City Commission Forum at the Belgrade Library on Oct. 17 while Jan Young and I worked as timers.

The state league is working with other groups in Missoula to try to bring Elaine Weiss to speak in Missoula in April. Assuming everything works out, we will get to hear her speak when we attend the spring retreat in Missoula. This is part of our celebration of the 100 year anniversary of the League and of women's suffrage. Elaine Weiss is the author of *The Woman's Hour* which tells the story about the ratification vote in Tennessee. We want to encourage our members to read her book so that we can have a discussion about it at a program meeting in March.

Gerrie Beck has volunteered to organize a book group within our league. She has more information about it in this Voter. She wants to start with us reading *The Woman's Hour*. After that, books will be selected by the members who join the group. Many leagues

have book groups as a way for members to get to know each other a little better.

Due to the holidays, we will only have one meeting in November (11th) and one in December (9th).

NOVEMBER MEETING

On Monday, November 11, the Bozeman League of Women Voters will host a presentation by Cathy Whitlock, Regents Professor of Earth Sciences at Montana State University. The title of her talk is "Montana's Changing Climate: What lies ahead?" Professor Whitlock is a fellow of the Montana Institute on Ecosystems, lead author of the 2017 Montana Climate Assessment, and the first scientist from a Montana institution to be elected to the U.S. National Academy of Sciences.

OCTOBER MEETINGS

Brian Fadie, Clean Energy Program Director for the Montana Environmental Information Center (MEIC), spoke at the October 14, meeting. He is a lobbyist for the non-profit group which is funded by grants and member's dues. He focused his message on the issue of rooftop solar issues. This is part of a rate case that will be heard before the Montana Public Service Commission (PSC) soon. He explained that it has been 8 or 9 years since Northwestern Energy has presented a rate case request. MEIC is a party to the request. There are many issues being considered, the rooftop solar issue being one. This is a very important issue and what is being proposed will provide strong disincentives to home owners to install systems.

The PSC is composed of five elected commissioners who are elected to four year terms from districts. The Commissioner from our district is Roger Koopman and is term

limited. The election in 2020 will determine who our new commissioner will be. All of the current commissioners are Republicans. The PSC oversees utilities in Montana, Northwestern Energy among others. Northwestern Energy is based in South Dakota and serves many Montana customers. As a for profit business it is committed to making money.

Fadie explained net metering in regard to rooftop solar energy production. This is a billing mechanism which puts solar panels on home owners roofs. Extra energy produced and not needed by the home owner goes into the energy grid to be used by others. The owner receives credits for those at the retail rate of \$.11 per unit. This can reduce the owners bill by quite a bit. At the end of the year if there are unused credits they are zeroed out. Of the 370,000 NW Energy customers in Montana, only about 2,000 or less than one percent use rooftop solar panels. This has little impact on the company's bottom line.

The rate case for rooftop solar proposes to make it uneconomic for future installations. Existing customers would be grandfathered and not affected by this change if it is adopted by the PSC. The details of this proposal do not make sense. Fadie said it was too soon for this proposal because it has so few customers with rooftop solar panels now. A cost/benefit study in 2018 was used to justify this new change, but it did not work out. He said the company would lose money. Small businesses that install rooftop solar panels would be hurt. He spoke briefly about renewable forms of energy for comparison with the cost of energy from coal. The range in costs is \$74/hour for coal and \$22/hour for the newest wind farm north of Great Falls. The older wind farm in central Montana is the next cheapest with water power between that and coal. The point is that renewable forms of energy have declined in cost of production. The cost of batteries has also declined making stored energy cheaper. Fadie estimated that it will probably take 25 years to convert to clean energy sources.

Restorative justice was the topic at the October 28, meeting. Casey Wagner is the Program Coordinator for the Restorative Justice Program for Gallatin County. He was joined by volunteers Nathaniel Pehl and Cindi Scheidt. The Program works with the Gallatin County Court System to repair the damage that is done by misdemeanor crime and improve the safety of the community. Volunteers work as a team to guide offenders through a process of personal accountability, reparative action, and positive growth.

Restorative justice is a judicial practice where a criminal meets with the victim of his crime and works to repair the damage done to the victim. This practice has deep roots in societies around the world. First nations in Canada developed this practice which led to its development in other countries. Desmond Tutu was a proponent following apartheid in South Africa. The Maori people in New Zealand have practiced it. It is a more holistic process for healing than a legalist process. The process works to restore a different world view. Restorative Justice is a new approach within the American Criminal Justice System. Why do we need it? The pain suffered by crime victims goes otherwise unhealed. We have excused criminals from their actions. They need to learn to be responsible for the damage they do.

Restorative Justice works on a wide range of offences. The victims of the offences need to feel safe. Without restorative justice we do not have this. Incarceration of the criminal increases the chance that their behavior will not change in the future. The criminal needs to do more than say he is sorry for his actions. He need to DO sorry which means that he needs to alter his behavior by some action.

Restorative Justice can be approached in different ways. In Gallatin County there are four Justice Councils which meet once a month to work individually with offenders referred by local courts. Four values guide their process: Personalism - the councils learn

about the offender's history and the root causes of their behavior. Participation - the offender becomes intensely involved in the process. Reparation - the offender works with the Justice Council and looks at the impact of his crime and the resultant ripple effects. Reintegration - What can the offender do to make amends for what he did? A reparations agreement is prepared. The offender leaves the Justice Council understanding that he won't behave that way again.

In 2001, the Restorative Justice Program was established by a Judge and a social worker with Community Corrections. The program works with misdemeanor offenders recommended to the Justice Councils. The Councils see two or three offenders at a time. The offenders begin by filling out a questionnaire. Many are first time offenders. A Judge makes the determination of which offenders may be helped by going through the process. Many different misdemeanor offenses qualify. Offenders may be all ages over 18. They work through the process until they graduate. The reparation agreement must meet the needs of the offender and the victim of the offense.

The Gibbs model of Reflection is used in the process. Offenders need to look at their actions and behavior. They look at the circumstances of what happened and why they did it. How can they modify their behavior? This process calls for the offender to evaluate what they did, analyze it, understand it and look at its consequences. Action plans are developed from this process. They avoid closed communication in the process. Open ended communication is used. This encourages creativity in the discussion options available. It allows the offender to reintegrate into the community. Integration means making choices that are empathetic and can result in a difference in the community. Attitudes can readjust for the individual to become lawful and fulfilling a positive and productive role in the community.

Under standard court punishments the offender pays a fine, thinks he is glad he is done, and never wants to find himself in court again. Going through the Restorative Justice process the questions are: Is this the last time I'll see you? Can I check in with you to see how I'm doing? It was helpful to have a group of people take the time to listen to me.

On average about 80 offenders are referred to the Restorative Justice process. There are four volunteer councils organized. About 75% of the cases are successful. Victim Services acts as an intermediary between the offender and victim. The Restorative Justice Program is funded by the county. Casey Wagner is a paid employee. The Justice Councils are made up of volunteers. This program is inexpensive and saves the county a lot by restoring offenders to society in a productive way and keeps them from reoffending. Casey is always looking for more volunteers for the Justice Councils. If you are interested you can contact him at 406-582-3710 or Casey.D.Wagner@gallatin.mt.gov.

**OBSERVER CORPS
County Commission -
October 15
Judi Maloney**

After the reading and approval of 6 items on the Consent Agenda, the items on the Regular Agenda Public Hearing were heard. Two were continued for further review. With no comments or objections from the public, the others were presented and approved.

The interesting items were Public Hearing and Decision on Requests for a Family Transfer Exemptions. These requests involved properties located in areas with no zoning. The county planner read the requests for transfer of property to family members. After it had been determined that neither family had applied for this exemption in the past, and showed no pattern of development, a representative of each family was sworn in and questioned by an assistant county attorney. Neighboring property owners had been contacted by mail and notice had been published in the Bozeman Daily Chronicle. With no objections received and requirements met, both were

approved. The last item was a request for CUP for a non-agricultural accessory structure on property in the Middle Cottonwood Zoning District. All required steps, legal notices and staff report were reviewed. Application was approved.

**City Commission
October 14
Bonnie White**

1. Mayoral Proclamation
“Indigenous Peoples’ Day”
2. Special Presentation
Cannery District Update
3. Commission Direction to City Manager on Establishing a Joint City Commission and Gallatin County Commission Meetings, have quarterly or annual meetings starting in 2020.
4. Quarterly Update to City Commission on the Implementation of the Bozeman Strategic Plan Top Five:
 - (1) Outreach
 - (2) Affordable Housing
 - (3) Planning and land use utilization
 - (4) Annexation analysis
 - (5) Park and Trail maintenance districts
5. Joint

Meeting of the City Commission and the Bozeman School District Topics including:
(1) Affordable Housing and possible land available through school district land and others , MSU and Bozeman Health
(2) New high school library will serve as a substation, proposing to be open after 4PM weekdays and on Saturday with staff.
(3) Partnership Early Reading Project Review
(4) Possible May 2020 Parks and Trails District Ballot Issue One additional item not on the agenda was that city commissioner Jeff Krauss said that he wanted members of the school board to talk to the board of regents when they are here for their meeting in Bozeman before the Bobcat Grizzly Football game concerning the need of a new building for the successful Gallatin College. It was a agenda packed and interesting meeting

TREASURER'S REPORT

Priscilla Dysart

Checking Account	\$1,971.67
Savings Account	8,424.95
LWV Education Fund	<u>188.18</u>
Total Assets 10/31/19	\$10,557.70

BOZEMAN LWV WEBSITE

Check out our website at:
<https://my.lwv.org/montana/bozeman>

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OCT 8, BOARD MEETING

People powered FAIR Maps a National Campaign was discussed. During year 1 the goal is to do the census well to educate people to increase their participation. Then redistricting will be the focus, with education oriented programs. Our league may receive \$2400 for our participation. In Montana only a few districts are competitive, are predictably Republican or Democrat. Sally Maison will be on the committee for people powered maps. The work requires looking at data and helping with a forum on the Census. The work would need to be done by May, 2020.

A Statewide Forum for state wide elections being organized by Sally Maison for candidates for Governor, Senate &/or the House. The Forum would not be in Bozeman or Missoula. Perhaps Billings.

Voter Registration:

Gail Dillaway gave out 120 birthday bags to the high school civics teacher. There are no registrations yet. She plans to give another 120 bags in Jan..

Roseanne will give Gail thank you notes that Faye Boom made to send to all the donors.

Diana McKinley contacted the high school civics teacher in Livingston to implement a birthday bag program there. She will discuss with Gail the best way to implement it.



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF THE BOZEMAN AREA
731 S. 12th
Bozeman, MT 59715**

THE BOZEMAN VOTER

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Tues. 6 Election Day

Mon. 12 **LWV Board Meeting, 10:30 a.m. Pilgrim Congregational Church.**
LWV Meeting, 11:45 a.m. Cathy Whitlock, Regents Professor of Earth Sciences at Montana State University will speak about "Montana's Changing Climate: What Lies Ahead". Pilgrim Congregational Church, brown bag.

December, 2019

Mon. 10 **LWV Board Meeting, 10:30 a.m. Pilgrim Congregational Church.**
LWV Meeting, 11:45 a.m. LWV member Karen LaClair will speak on the 2020 Census. Pilgrim Congregational Church, brown bag.