

READER

Arts, entertainment, bluster and some news

May 6, 2021 | FREE | Vol. 18, Issue 18

*Thank you,
mothers!*



May 18 election guide

To help share candidates' positions on the issues, the Reader offers an election guide for the upcoming May 18 election. What follows are brief biographical entries on each candidate and some questions to help define their positions. The races covered this week are Pend Oreille Hospital Board, the Northern Lights, Inc. Board and the Southside Water & Sewer District election. Next week, we'll cover the East Bonner County Library Board and the West Bonner County School Board Levy.

Q&A with Pend Oreille Hospital Board candidates

By Lyndsie Kiebert
Reader Staff

The Pend Oreille Hospital District Board of Trustees' election boasts five candidates in 2021, with only two seats up for grabs, each for a six-year term. The board is responsible for allocating public money to local health care facilities. The *Reader* caught up with each candidate, asking them to share a bit about their background and what inspired them to seek a POHD trustee position.

Questions, with answers numbered accordingly:

1. Tell us a bit about yourself and why you have chosen to run for a trustee seat on the Pend Oreille Hospital District Board.
2. What is your opinion of the board's current operations? If elected, what would you change, if anything?
3. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on health care all over the world, including in Bonner County. How will this past year inform your decision-making on the board of trustees?

Julie Berreth

Age: 51
Birthplace and residence: Life-long North Idaho resident
How many years lived in Bonner County? 30
Government service: None
Profession: Strategic marketing, branding and creative professional
Education: North Idaho College
Family: Married, two children, three grandchildren

1. Having been a marketing, branding and creative professional for more than 30 years, identifying and defining a long-term vision, along with the strategy and executable tactics to get there is second nature to me. Traditional health care models, by and large, have failed to adapt to the changing needs and lifestyles of their patients. Watching many of my loved ones, including myself, turn to alternative and complementary forms of medicine due to these failures was one of the main factors in my decision to run for a POHD seat. There are incredible opportunities to establish a vision that can meet the needs of the future through a combination of traditional, alternative and complementary health care, while resolving many of the challenges conventional providers face in rural areas.
2. It's clear a change of direction is necessary. POHD's recent audit found all three Bonner General Health clinics currently under service agreement are operating at a total loss of \$1.9 million. POHD's total revenue



Julie Berreth.

- from all sources, including taxes, is only about \$1.5 million. This is simply not sustainable. Now more than ever, people are looking for less-invasive, more natural and toxin-free methods of healing. A Grand View Research study released in February reports the global market-size value of complementary and alternative medicine in 2021 is more than \$100 billion. Why is this being overlooked? The people of Bonner County should be the driving force behind the types of public health care funded with their tax dollars, rather than a best-out-of-seven majority trustee vote.
3. The pandemic has presented a much different picture of how people consume health care not related to COVID-19. There are two key points from the Grand View Research study that underline the undeniable demand for a more integrative approach to health care that combines conventional, alternative and complementary medicine.
 - Traditional alternative medicine or botanicals coupled therapeutic interventions that

incorporated herbs, oils and other supplements dominated the market with a share of 38.48% in last year.

- Based on the method of distribution, more rural areas and e-sales are expected to see remarkable opportunities in the near future, largely due to COVID-19 lockdowns and social distancing recommendations. The study also indicates the global complementary and alternative medicine market size is expected to reach USD \$404.66 billion by 2028.

POHD not only has a fiduciary responsibility to the taxpayers it serves to seriously explore these methods as viable options to incorporate, but also has an obligation to facilitate the types of health care that helps achieve and sustain the health and wellness of Bonner County residents.

Dolores "Dodie" Glass

Age: No answer
Birthplace and residence: San Jose, Calif./Dover Bay
How many years lived in Bonner County? 3
Government service: No answer
Education: Master's in nursing (MSN), bachelor's in science, nursing (BSN)
Profession: Retired from clinical nursing (you never really retire from nursing)
Family: Married with four children between us and six grandchildren. My husband is a veteran and our two sons are currently active duty military. One is currently deployed.



Dolores "Dodie" Glass.

1. I have always had a passion for quality health care. I was approached to look at the needs of POHD. I feel my background master's in nursing and bachelor's in science, nursing, and my experience qualified me to pursue a seat on this board.
2. I think we need more clarity and transparency on the functions of this board. I feel the taxpayer deserves to better understand how their tax dollar is spent.
3. I have done extensive research to better understand the impact of COVID. I feel it is my job as a "health care provider," to inform and educate, to help reduce the fear that has been generated. Fear does not promote quality health.

< see ELECTION, page 15 >

Thomas L. Lawrence

(incumbent)

Age: 74

Birthplace and residence: Kalispell, Mont./Bonner County

How many years lived in Bonner County? 44

Government service: United States Army

Profession: Family practice physician for over 40 years

Education: B.S. biology from Carroll College; medical school at University of Colorado; family practice residency, Milwaukee, Wisc.

Family: Married for 47 years, two sons both born and raised in Sandpoint, and five grandchildren.

1. I moved to Sandpoint with my wife Debra in 1977, where we have raised our two sons. I have had the privilege of treating patients and delivering babies to thousands of residents, including multiple generations of families, during my career in Bonner County. Because of my 40 years' experience as a family practice provider in Bonner County I am very familiar with the issues that confront the POHD.

2. Yes, I believed they are managed well. I want the three outpatient clinics to be independent and more financially stable. The board needs to continue to pursue inpatient-to-outpatient care transition as that is the health care trend in the US.

Top three reasons for the transition:

Technology — Has increased more options to provide outpatient care.

Insurance Companies — Require more services to be done on an outpatient basis.

Consumer Desire — Patients want to heal and recover at home.

3. COVID was challenging; however, the clinics are recovering, and patient volumes are increasing. I think the patient comes first and I support our tax dollars to enhance and expand



Thomas Lawrence.

the services provided by the three clinics.

Helen Parsons

(incumbent)

Age: 51

Birthplace and residence: Sandpoint

How many years lived in Bonner County? 51

Government service: No

Profession: Retired

Education: I have a diploma from CLA (Christian Liberty Academy). I believe having worked at Sandpoint Women's Health in the health care industry for over 28 years, my most relevant education for this position came from on-the-job experience.

Family: Being born and raised in Sandpoint and having married a Sandpoint local, we have lots of family and friends here. Daren and I have been married 32 years and our children, Hailey (Stefan) Harlicker and Emily (Dakota) Jackson, also call Sandpoint home.

1. I worked for Sandpoint Women's Health for over 28 years. I retired in March 2019. I, along with my siblings, am the primary caregiver for our aging mom. I currently serve as a volunteer at North Summit Church, helping in an after-school program. I am an active member of my church and have volunteered as part of their worship ministry



Helen Parsons.

for over 20 years. I volunteer on the Bonner General Health Foundation Advisory Council.

I currently serve on the Pend Oreille Hospital District Board for which I am seeking re-election. I am running for a seat on this board because I have a passion for good health care to remain in our local community.

2. I believe the board's current operations of supporting outpatient clinics is vital. The Behavioral Health, Sandpoint Women's Health, and Ear Nose and Throat Clinics are all necessary. I would love to see us expand support to the growing need of behavioral health in our community.

3. I believe Bonner General is a vital part of the Sandpoint Community. Whether you need an ER visit, an emergency surgery or you are having a baby, Bonner General has been there for the people of our community and surrounding areas. During COVID it was no different. The doctors, nurse practitioners, nurses, medical assistants, lab techs, sonographers, etc., continued to show up to work and perform their jobs well.

This past year has served as a good reminder for our community that we need to continue to support Bonner General. As a member of the board of trustees, my decisions will be aligned to support this.

Jessie Peters

Age: 39

Birthplace and residence: Born in Arizona, currently reside in Cocolalla

How many years lived in Bonner County? 3 1/2

Government service: None

Profession: Family nurse practitioner

Education: Master's degree in nursing, family nurse practitioner

Family: Husband of 19 years and three sons (ages 9, 11, 12)

1. I have always had a heart for rural health care, it's actually what motivated me to become a nurse practitioner over a decade ago. This heart to see my community healthy is why I am running for the trustee position on the Pend Oreille Hospital District Board. During my career in health care leadership, I have pioneered rural clinics, led health care nonprofits and have served on an Accountable Care Organization (ACO) board for hospital systems. I have learned many lessons about the unique health care challenges rural communities face. I have expertise in bringing about positive change in the nonprofit health care sector, and want to serve my taxing district by representing the voter and their health care needs on the hospital district board.

2. From my current vantage point, it is difficult to understand the details of the hospital district's goals, mission, strategies and plans. This is also what I would advocate to change, if elected. The health care needs of our taxing district need to be assessed in order to ensure that dollars are being spent toward meeting those needs, reflectively. I am not clear from what is publicly available from the hospital district's board of trustees if, when and how thoroughly Bonner County's health care needs/disparities have been assessed. There needs to then be a clear, well-articulated and well-communicated plan about how tax



Jessie Peters.

dollars flow to positively impact the health and wellness of our communities.

3. I have a strong value around patient-centered care. I think patients know themselves best, and the health care system should support patients, coming alongside to improve health outcomes. This past year only reinforces the values I already hold. As a decision-maker on the board of trustees, I will advocate on behalf of the health and wellness of each voter. The hospital district board of trustees has the opportunity to create, communicate and implement a plan to positively impact the health care needs of Bonner County.

ELECTION INFORMATION

• Absentee ballot applications must be received by the county clerk by 5 p.m. on Friday, May 7.

• Absentee ballots must be received (not just postmarked) by May 18 at 8 p.m.

• Election day is Tuesday, May 18

• Check Sandpoint Online's Election Central for a list of polling place addresses

Q&A with Northern Lights District 4 board candidates

By Ben Olson
Reader Staff

Northern Lights, Inc. has two candidates on the ballot this spring for its board of directors election in District 4. NLI holds elections every year, rotating the terms for the seven districts. The NLI Board election is mail-in only, and ballots must be received by Tuesday, May 11 at 5 p.m. Voting is open to NLI members from District 2 and 4 (the *Reader* is only covering the District 4 race since District 2 is in Montana, outside of our distribution area). Results will be announced during the virtual annual meeting Wednesday, May 12 at 6 p.m.

The NLI Board of Directors establishes policies, rates and the direction of the energy cooperative. The *Reader* reached out to both candidates running for District 4 seats to ask about their background and what motivated them to seek a position on the board.

Questions, with answers numbered accordingly:

1. Tell us a bit about yourself and why you have chosen to run on the NLI Board of Directors for District 4.
2. What abilities will you bring to the position that your challenger may not? What sets you apart from your challenger?
3. Do you feel our local electrical infrastructure is adequate to handle all the growth this region has experienced in the past few years? If not, what needs to be done to make it so and what improvements need to be put in place to accommodate future growth?

David Pemberton
(incumbent)

Age: 70

Birthplace and residence: Vernal, Utah; Bonner County from 1974 (with a brief eight-year interruption for work placement) until present.

Government service: U.S. Army, Vietnam veteran 1968-1971; Bonner County Sheriff's Department; Bonner County District Court.

Profession: Military, law enforcement, utility lineman — utility engineer and utility contractor with 31 years in the utility industry. Building contractor and private business owner. Board member for Northern Lights for nine years.

Education: After high school I was trained in multiple military schools, including avionics. Associate's degree in law enforcement, multiple certifications for the utility industry (combining 31 years of education) and project management.

Family: Wife, four adult children, nine grandchildren. Also one sweet dog and two farm kitties.

1. I chose to run for the NLI directorship as a way to give back and serve my community by bringing my acquired knowledge and education of the utility industry. I had worked with Northern Lights on many projects and felt it would be a good fit for my knowledge of Bonner County and skill sets. I have acquired nine years as a board member, adding to my knowledge and information of this technical and ever-progressing industry.

2. The abilities I bring to this position are in the minutia of the (combined 31 years) of utility work. This along with my relationships in the community and the culture of the Pacific Northwest. Having lived, worked and participated almost 50 years in this area, I am attuned to its intricacies. I have an awareness of what it takes to climb poles in snowstorms, design sites for future building projects and a keen education on what



David Pemberton.

NLI uses for its infrastructure. I appreciate what the employees and board have to accomplish — such as rate settings, storm mitigation and service requirements, in order to keep the lights on and the rates low. My board and utility work has given me unparalleled experience that my challenger does not have.

3. NLI is primarily a distribution provider, meaning NLI has local infrastructure that delivers power to our members. Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) provides the majority of the long-distance transmission service to NLI and which delivers the generated power BPA produces around the Pacific Northwest region. BPA's system has ample capacity to serve NLI and the region's growing load.

NLI's engineering department does a comprehensive study of the portion of the power system NLI owns every five to 10 years to determine if upgrades are needed for load projected growth or other factors. The results of the study provide the road map to NLI's capital system upgrades, such as replacing a substation transformer with a larger one or increasing wire size on a main feeder distribution line. The information from this study is reviewed with NLI's board to help make budget decisions.

We have the ability to borrow, to install new infrastructure and maintain services as we know it. BPA has a similar process it goes through for transmission and generation planning. NLI also par-

ticipates alongside BPA to share information and provide feedback in this process.

Thomas Fletcher

Age: 67

Birthplace and residence: Houston, Texas; Careywood

Years in Bonner County: Purchased property in 2013. Moved permanently in 2016

Government service: none

Profession: M.D., retired board certified cardiovascular and interventional radiology; FACR, fellow of the American College of Radiology.

Education: B.A. in mathematics and philosophy, Vanderbilt University; M.D., University of Texas, Southwestern; fellowship and assistant professor, Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Family: married with children and grandchildren.

1. In one word — transparency. Four years ago the NLI proposed and passed two bylaws that I felt sent the wrong message. At that time, I decided to run for the NLI board. One bylaw had to do with how the board members were to be compensated. Prior to the new rule the board members were offered health care insurance as compensation. Afterwards, the board members were to be compensated in cash. Cloaked in the wording of the bylaws change was the dollar amount of the compensation package for the board members.

Even today the compensation package for the board members is shrouded in secrecy. When I requested from the NLI data on the compensation package, I was asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement. Why? What are they hiding?

When I requested a copy of the IRS Form 990, they again



Thomas Fletcher.

asked me to sign a non-disclosure agreement, which, by the way, is illegal. (The Form 990 is mandated by federal law to be publicly available.)

Why the non-disclosure? What are they hiding? The other bylaw change altered the mechanics on how future bylaw changes could occur. The new rule requires 10 times more signatures to propose a change. The new rule places greater distance between the membership and the governing board.

Why the distance? Isn't the NLI a cooperative?

The NLI employees support the re-election of my opponent. The NLI management supports the re-election of my opponent. The NLI board president supports the re-election of my opponent. Why the urgency to keep a fresh face off the board? With Thomas Fletcher, you will get transparency.

By the way, money is not the reason I'm running for the board. I pledge to contribute 100% of my salary to local charities.

2. It has been emphasised by my opponent and Steve Elgar, the NLI board president and marine biologist, that I have no experience in running a utility company. True statement. On the other hand, I would argue that board members should bring to an organization different perspectives. Even a marine biologist can contribute.

How much experience do any of the board members have in radiation biology? How many of them can claim to have training or experience in the hazards of

< NLI, con't from page 16 >

electromagnetic radiation on human tissue? As a board certified radiologist, I received formal training in biophysics and during my professional career I served as the radiation safety officer for a major hospital network in central Texas.

It might serve the interests of the NLI members to have someone on the board who can understand and apply the scientific literature on the biohazards of non-ionizing radiation, the energy that emanates from power lines and smart meters into the human body.

3. Absolutely not. We must invest in infrastructure.

Just this last week in Careywood and surrounding areas, we experienced yet another electrical outage due to an infrastructure failure. My opponent has run a campaign on the proposition of maintaining the status quo. To quote his flyer, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." The people of Texas back in January of this year believed that their electrical grid wasn't broken. One month later they changed their minds after millions were without power and hundreds froze to death.

The Texas electrical system is run by a board much like the NLI board. The president of the Texas utility board is a person with loads of experience designing and running an electrical grid. She had developed an alternative energy utility system in the state of Michigan and was drafted by the Texas board to build for Texas a similar Green New Deal utility grid.

Sixty-six billion dollars later, what did the people of Texas get?

During the arctic vortex freeze of February 2021, the solar panel contribution to the grid fell to zero and the windmill contribution fell to 4%. Evidently, clever political slogans and gobs of money do not necessarily make for a reliable energy system.

The grid failure in Texas was a failure of leadership. The age of our infrastructure and the growth of our region mandates investment in the infrastructure.

I have been accused of suffering from an anti-science attitude, a climate denier who does not want to invest in the future of energy. Wrong. I believe we must invest intelligently, not ideologically.

ELECTION INFORMATION

• NLI Board election ballots are open only to NLI members within District 2 and 4. They are mail-in only and must be received no later than May 11 at 5 p.m.

• Winner announced at the NLI virtual meeting May 12 at 6 p.m.

What's the special revenue bond election about?

Bonner County is asking voters to borrow \$8.7 million to pay for major solid waste improvements

By Lyndsie Kiebert
Reader Staff

Bonner County voters will have the chance to vote on a special revenue bond on their May 18 ballot — a measure which would allow Bonner County to take on an \$8.7 million USDA loan to fund major improvements to local solid waste operations.

The bond election is the latest step in a multi-year, multi-tiered effort to bring the county waste management infrastructure into the 21st century. The path to major upgrades became official when outside consultant Great West Engineering released its Bonner County Solid Waste 10-Year Capital Improvements Plan in 2019, a document that pinpointed the most inadequate waste collection sites in the county and provided a timeline for implementing improvements — particularly to the Colburn Waste Transfer Site, where all county garbage is processed.

"Our system is a 25-year-old system — 25 years ago, it was built with a five-year life expectancy," Solid Waste Director Bob Howard told the *Reader*, referring specifically to the Colburn site and its undersized tipping floor, where trash is unloaded into truck containers to be hauled away.

"Nothing changed after that five years," he said. "It's been the status quo since it was built 25 years ago. We have doubled the volume of trash that we manage, and that shows the population increase also. ... Our critical infrastructure needs to grow with that population increase, to be able to handle the volume of trash that will be produced."

While borrowed money is typically followed by increased costs to taxpayers, Bonner County residents are already paying the fees necessary to pay back the \$8.7 million loan in full over 10 years. In September 2019, the county commissioners approved a rate hike of 62%, raising the annual solid waste fee per county household, starting with their 2020 tax bill, from \$115 to \$185 — or, from \$9.58 to \$15.41 monthly.

A special revenue bond is defined by a guarantee of repayment with revenue from pre-established fees, not additional taxes. By pursuing a loan, Bonner County will be able to begin construction as soon as summer 2022. Thanks to the fee increase, financial models show revenues capable of paying it off by 2030.

"We made a move last year to establish that new rate so that we could actually get the loan. Without that rate increase, we wouldn't be able to get the



loan," Commission Chair Dan McDonald said during a public hearing on the special revenue bond April 20.

"At the old rate, we were struggling to keep up with operating costs," he added.

The majority of the loan funds will go toward an overhaul of Colburn Waste Transfer Site. Expenses include \$3.5 million for a new transfer building; \$670,000 to recondition the existing transfer building; \$690,000 for a new household hazardous waste disposal building; \$362,000 for a commercial scale; and \$741,000 for other general improvements to the Colburn site.

Efficiency is also a major focus of the Colburn site improvements, seeing as trash is often handled two or three times during the transfer process. Additionally, the intermingling of residential and commercial traffic presents a safety issue at the site that the county hopes to address.

Additional costs included in the \$8.7 million are improvements to the Idaho Hill and Dickensheet waste collection sites, totaling about \$1 million each; \$358,000 for upgrades to the Dufort site; and about \$289,000 in other project-related expenses.

"This is more about an investment as opposed to an expenditure," McDonald said at the hearing, "and the bottom line is we really don't have a choice."

Howard said that should voters deny the bond, Bonner County would have the option to seek judicial confirmation to borrow the money. The county could also increase rates again "in order to accomplish what we're trying to accomplish," Howard said.

Those with questions about the Bonner County Solid Waste Special Revenue Bond Election can reach the Solid Waste office at 208-255-5681 ext. 2 or by emailing solidwaste@bonnercountyyid.gov.

An aerial shot of the Colburn waste transfer site tipping floor, which will be replaced if county voters approve the bond May 18. Photo courtesy of Bonner County Solid Waste.

AFFORDABLE LAND TO BUILD ON IN CLARK FORK



This 1.31 nicely treed lot has lots of amenities to get started – gravel driveway with a gate; power pulled into the property; a water hookup to the community water system; a starter structure with power and propane (21x28); a second outbuilding that is 10x16. Access to the back of the property from Cemetery Road, and fronts a paved county maintained road. Schedule an appointment to preview the property.

\$165,000



Carol D. Curtis
(208) 290-5947
www.sandpoint.com
ccurtis@sandpoint.com

