

ELDERS COMMITTEE FALL RETREAT MEETING MINUTES – Draft 4 Approved at 10/23/25 meeting

DATE: Saturday, September 20, 2025

LOCATIONS: Alice's Wonderland

MEETING TIME: 10 a.m.

Facilitator: Tom Boyatt

Scribe: Carolyn Gsell

Committee Members Present: Diane Albino, Ann Bennett-Rogers, ~~Jain Elliott~~, Kay Kintzley, Robert “Mouseman” McCarthy, Eric Nicholson

Committee Members Absent: Jain Elliott, Nancy Hafner, Michael James Long, Heather Kent

Others Present: Synnove Abrahamsen, Rolyn Arata, Roberta Austin, Steve Barnes, Tom Boyatt (facilitator), Anna Brown, Darlene Colborn, Lisa Cooley, Katie Cousins, Linda Frohbach, Carolyn Gsell (scribe), Annemarie Hirsch, Chris Howe, Merrill Levine, Jim May, Robert “Mouseman” McCarthy, Suzanne Philips, Jon Pincus, Jerry Lee Shultz, Patricia VanEsso, Jenny Wilson

Board Candidates Present (afternoon): Felicia Kirsch, Kevin Levy (board liaison), Zahra Indigo Ronlov, Trevor Ross, Lawrence Taylor

A quorum was established: 6 of 9 committee members were present.

AGENDA

- Introductions – everyone present stated their name
- Housekeeping
- Announcements
- Approve Agenda
- Wristband Subcommittee Report – Tom B.
 - Sauna wristbands for Elder discount - Darlene
- Approve Linda Frohbach & Rolyn Arata for ECOCF Listserv
- Events Subcommittee report and upcoming events– Kay K.
- Geezer Pleezer – Anna B. on behalf of Cathy P.
- Elder Hub Camp – Anna B.
- Still Living Room 2025 Debrief – Carolyn G.
- Still Living Room (SLR) and Elder Camp Decon – Anna B. & Carolyn G.
- Elder Volunteers subcommittee report – Annemarie H.
- Wristband Subcommittee Report part 2 – Tom B
- Storage issue at the Conex – Jerry S.

Potluck Lunch: Noon – 2

- Board Candidates Speak
- Succession Planning for Elders Committee and Subcommittees – Tom B.
- Meeting Evaluation

5 p.m. Spirit Walk

Housekeeping – Kay

Kay gave a shout out to Anna B. who opened Alice's on Friday afternoon. She thanked her for preparing the space. Kay made a request for people to help with the clean up before locking up on Sunday noon. Mouseman offered to clean the carpets if we can get a carpet cleaning machine.

Announcements

- Merrill – Fair election ballots will be via email this year, unless a request is made for snail mail. The email list is derived from the membership list. The list will come out of Sunshine database. Jeffrey (OCF membership secretary) is reported to be attending the Thursday night meeting. Tom said that Nancy updated all the email addresses in Sunshine and has been working with Jeffrey. To be eligible to vote, you must have voted in the last 2 out of 3 elections. If not, you must re-apply for membership in order to vote. You can contact elections@oregoncountryfair.org to request a mail-in ballot, or you can also call the office with your request.
- Ann – Important dates coming up:
 - Oct. 1 Financial planning & budget meeting
 - Jan. 31 Capital projects due
 - Oct. 1 – Nov. 15 Guideline changes due so board can vote on these in December.
- Synnove has some giveaways to pass around.
- Anna brought extra Elder laminated cards leftover from the Fair and passed them out.

Agenda approved with addition of Elder Volunteers Subcommittee report.

Wristband Subcommittee Report – Tom B.

We have approximately 1800 elders listed in the master spreadsheet. Of those, about 970 Elders acquired wristbands, plus an additional 760 “S.O.” passes. We were capped a bit over 640 parking stickers. The Elders collected \$178,000 for wristbands and parking passes to the Fair. Less than 40 people who ordered wristbands didn’t show up, just under 3%. Note that there are no refunds for wristbands that were paid for but went unused.

Sauna wristbands for Elder discount - Darlene

Darlene spoke with George, and he said if we can come up with a system for identifying Elders, he could offer an Elder discount to the Ritz Sauna and Showers entry fee. Meeting attendees decided that we should bring this up in a committee meeting. This likely needs to be worked out with the Events Manager. Merrill mentioned she was formerly with the Fair’s wristband inventory. Grumpy was the person who purchased the wristbands. Grumpy is one of the Elders Committee’s BUM Liaisons. Maybe he can help us with this. Darlene is willing to carry this offer forward and will contact folks on the Wristband Subcommittee.

Approve Linda Frohbach & Rolyn Arata for ECOCF Listserv

Linda introduced herself and gave her Fair history. She recently began working behind the scenes for Elder Wristbands by helping with the Pass Request Forms. This year Linda accepted Nancy’s invitation to take on the Elders Budget.

Linda reported that this year the Fair Budget Committee has asked each group to outline the volunteer hours for folks who receive earned wristbands. So far Linda has received 18 responses (out of 24 Elder volunteers receiving earned passes). Of those 18 people, there are thousands of hours of volunteer work accrued.

Ann mentioned there is a huge problem in determining volunteer hours. The fair is looking at hours for event-related tasks. The board and admin are trying to determine if there are redundant positions (could some be eliminated?).

Mouseman made a motion to accept Linda Frombach and Rolyn Arata on the ECOCF list. Ann seconded. The motion passed by Unanimous consent.

Events Subcommittee Report and Upcoming Events – Kay K.

Reservations for Alice's need to be made one year in advance.

Event dates for 2026:

- Spring Retreat May 8 – 10
- Fall Retreat September 18, 19, 20
- Meet & Greet July 9

The Meet and Greet was well attended. Volunteering went very well. Wonderful people showed up to help. Eric, Rich, and Kay started early Thursday morning and finished up at 10 p.m. The new benches around the fire pit were great. Kay guesses about 250 people attended. The food was good.

APPLAUSE

The event creates community.

Synnové has taken on keeping track of collecting funds for events. With that money she purchased a giant, heavy duty Titan cooler which will allow Events volunteers to transport and store the food 3 days in advance. This avoids the Thursday pre-Fair traffic that they have had to get through to get supplies to Alice's. She requested assistance during the lunch break to take the cooler to our Conex for winter storage.

Food for Meet and Greet has become an issue. With so many people, there is a concern about food safety and sanitation. Next year, everything for the party will be pre-prepared. The goal is to simplify the prep for the event. At our spring retreat, Kay will get the Titan cooler out of the Conex, take it home, and she will bring it with all the Meet and Greet food to Elder Camp a few days prior to the event.

Kay passed around the words to the Teddy Bear Picnic song. She would like to see Elders start a tradition of singing the Teddy Bear Picnic song at the Picnic. It would be both fun and bring everyone at the picnic together.

People are very enthusiastic about the Teddy Bear Song.

Ann - There is a mobile home now set up at the winery and may eventually be a meeting spot. TBD

Kay offered some additional thoughts. She asked about ways to resolve a Fair Family issue. She would like to see someone with a grievance start by attending a committee meeting. There are two ways to reach the committee – attend a meeting or send an email to elderscommittee@oregoncountryfair.org. From there we could direct the person with a grievance. Kay recommended that, given we still have 3 slots open on the committee, we should encourage more people to apply. She added that because there is not a designated go-to person for the committee, people end up contacting the scribe. It's unfair to have someone lodge their complaint with the scribe.

Mouseman doesn't think people with a grievance should be coming to the committee. He feels it is not the committee's job. Kay feels that people should have the opportunity to come with a grievance, and we can just point them in the right direction.

Annemarie would like to see if the committee would appoint a chairperson. That way someone with an issue has a single point of contact.

Annemarie asked about how people go about becoming a member of the Elders committee. She read the procedure that was established in March 2021.

To read the document, click here:

https://ocfelders.weebly.com/uploads/1/3/5/8/135834530/elders_committee_description_updated_march_2021.pdf

Geezer Pleezer – Anna B. on behalf of Cathy P.

4 Onsite coordinators are needed. 2 is insufficient, and it was Roy Lisi's first year. He worked hard. Cathy P. stepped in to help. The Geezer Pleezer program has many complexities.

Elder Camp Hub – Anna B.

There were some big SNAFUs this year. A camp Elder reported having a service dog with her and her partner. It turned out not to be a service dog. Anna and Jorjan will bring the dog situation to the next regular committee meeting. John Higby was a huge help at camp. The work he did should earn a wristband.

The kiddie pool blew out, so Anna got a new one. Next year they want to go to a smaller 8 x 8 hospitality tent. For safety purposes, the camp stove cannot be used inside the hospitality tent, so they kept it outside. Without the kitchen set up, they avoided having a bunch of dirty dishes laying around.

Elder Camp would like to see someone volunteer to do some decorating. They are not using haybales for seating anymore. Annemarie gave kudos to Anna and Jorjan for making it through their first year.

Annemarie also mentioned that Kelly has fallen off the radar. He hasn't communicated so we should think about how to manage our two South Woods Elder Camps SWEATS and Del Boca Veneta.

For next Elders Comm meeting add Anna's issue (dogs) to agenda. Also vetting S.O.'s.

Mouseman pointed out that for digital convenience we have designated our "assistants" or "helpers" as S.O.'s. Roberta's son helped with many of her tasks. Back in the day we called our extra "S.O." passes "Companion" passes. There is a distinction between a companion and an S.O. Elders "S.O.'s" should be contributing, either helping the Elder who purchased their pass, or contributing to Elders' projects at the event.

Still Living Room 2025 Debrief – Carolyn G.

Carolyn thanked all the many volunteers who made the Still Living Room exhibit possible this year. The mid-week retrieval of items out of the Conex with actual setup on pre-Fair Saturday is a good system. We had some new people volunteering for the setup. Next year Theresa Vaughn will take

over the SLR decorating with her partner Aviathar. He and two of his friends were instrumental in taking over our Water Jeannie's work in her absence. This involved hooking up hoses to the water system to water the SLR and nearby paths. Carolyn will follow up with Jean B. to see if she plans to come next year. The Monday post-Fair decon is still a challenge in terms of getting enough muscle power to take two loads of furniture from SLR and Elder Hub Camp delivered back to the Conex at Doug's Green.

Mouseman pointed out that the Dragon Bench at the center of the SLR is not doing well and needs to be saved. We could take it on as a project. The bench was built in honor of Nicky Skully's son who drowned in the big December 2004 Tsunami in S.E. Asia. Mouseman also pointed out that the FARTS mobile is deteriorating.

Carolyn suggested we bring up the dragon bench at the next meeting for a capital project. Ann said that Fair Path Planning also has been looking at the bench. This could be a joint venture between Path Planning and Elders.

Still Living Room (SLR) and Elder Camp Decon – Anna B. & Carolyn G.

Anna shared that Elders Camp and the Still Living Room have always been broken down on Monday. She asked why we couldn't wait until Wednesday post Fair when there is no traffic and much less dust. The suggestion was made to check in with operations about coming back onto the site mid-week post Fair. Include this in the next meeting agenda.

One of the primary reasons we take down on Monday is so that items don't get stolen. Mouseman said he is fine with driving the tractor on post-Fair Monday, and he is concerned about theft if we leave items out. It was pointed out that Kevin McCormick brings his truck on site to pick up the timelines and other more fragile items that get stored in archives, so we would continue that tradition. One downside to waiting until mid-week is that we lose our out-of-town volunteer pool. The counter to that is people from in-town are more rested up and willing to help.

Eric expressed his appreciation for Jerry Shultz's contribution to the SLR. Jerry does all the electrical wiring things. He has great skills and Mouseman is highly skilled with his tractor.

Volunteer Subcommittee Report – Annemarie

We worked very hard to find people to volunteer on Monday post-Fair, and yet we didn't get enough folks.

Connecting the S.O. pass with volunteering would be helpful.

We have a list of all the people who are in leadership positions with Elders. Annemarie would like to update the list. The purpose of the list is so that Elders know who to contact for the various projects. The list is posted as a document on the OCF Elders website and can be downloaded to your own device. For those sensitive to people using their email address, one can always set up a separate email address just for OCF volunteering. (Scribe's note – Elder Volunteers subcommittee will send a link to the document after it is updated).

Back in the winter and spring of 2025, Annemarie and Synnove called many of the new Elders who showed an interest in volunteering. That project helped recruit people.

Annemarie invited people to contact us about anything they would like to announce we can put on the website.

Kudos to Jerry for redesigning and constructing the new Memorial kiosk.

Wristband Subcommittee Report part 2 – Tom B.

The Tuesday pre-Fair wristband program at the church was successful, but lines were long and slow. Next year, the Elders Wristband Subcommittee will double up on the task. (4 people rather than 2).

Wednesday night at the Sticker Booth there was a very long line of people from other Fair groups waiting to get wristbands, and our Elder Wristband volunteers stepped in to help. Tom spent most of his fair at the sticker booth and had the opportunity to compare notes with other groups administering WBs and learning from them.

Storage issue at the Conex – Jerry S.

Jerry related that we have been putting all our SLR and Camp furniture in the Conex with the big, heavy SLR storage box placed in front just behind the door. We have been storing items in the Conex for 3 years. Jerry and Eric came out to the site post-Fair to ensure the box made it into the Conex. Sometime later, Diane spotted the box sitting outside of the Conex and reported it to Eric. Whoever took it upon themselves to take out our box needs to get a talking too. We need to get some assurances from the Fair that our things are protected. At the conclusion of the conversation contact was made with Alexis to arrange returning the SLR storage box back into the Conex. It requires a forklift.

LUNCH BREAK

Reconvened at 2:05 p.m.

The following candidates spoke: Felicia Kirsch, Kevin Levy (board liaison), Zahra Indigo Ronlov, Trevor Ross, Lawrence Taylor

Each candidate was given up to 5 minutes to make opening remarks. The floor was then opened to questions.

Format – each candidate spoke for up to 5 minutes. This was followed by a Q&A Session.

Succession Planning – Tom

Within Elders, Tom notices a huge challenge finding sufficient numbers of volunteers to assist with Elder projects at the 2025 Fair.

One of the top responsibilities of any leader is to nurture a replacement. The people on the Wristband Subcommittee have been talking about this. One idea that has stood out is to offer bite-sized volunteer tasks that introduce a volunteer to the broader scope of volunteer work done by elders.

We have a Mail Chimp program we use to administer sending emails to elders for sending out Pass

Request Forms. We are going to start working with the Elder Volunteer Subcommittee to develop a set of volunteer tasks that are smaller in scope yet contribute to the larger tasks at hand.

There are cycles, and the pinnacle of Elders goes back to the earliest days of the Fair.

We have over 1400 active email addresses in our Elder Master database. We need to make this volunteer recruitment intentional.

Annemarie reminded the group that Elders receive 24 “earned” passes (these are assigned to Elder Volunteers that put in the most hours). It would be great to increase the number of earned passes.

There are many volunteers contributing but don’t receive a pass.

Comments:

- The Fair doesn’t know how to handle us. The budget committee doesn’t like the fact that our numbers continue to grow.
- Crews provide service to the vendors and the public. Elders are a bit different.
- Elders are at the peak of the bell curve.
- We have a board liaison. Our staff liaison is Alex, and our budget liaisons are Grumpy and Hilary.
- The budget committee is trying to “right size” the Fair.
- The Fair is trying to get a full understanding of the volunteer work and how many hours are being put into putting on the Fair. It’s a good way to weed out people who are abusing the system.
- The work required of the budget committee is a challenge. It’s tough work. You must look at root causes of things. For many years, we had the notion that we had to make something new every year. Each time you expand the Fair, you are guaranteeing you need 300 -400 more volunteers. We need to stop expansion. Focus on infrastructure.
- Linda is working with Katie to write up a report to present to the budget committee.
- For a lot of fairgoers, there is a misconception of what Elders are doing. Elders are helping to run the Fair. It is bizarre to hear that people are even talking about the value of Elders. It is almost absurd.
- 10% of first-time crew volunteers don’t come back. This year the gate (ticket sales) was down. We cannot take this Fair for granted.

Meeting evaluation

Kudos on the candidates speaking.

Great facilitation.

Katie C. volunteered to facilitate the Thursday night meeting.

Kay thanked everyone who helped set up the space. Our budget allots \$100 for food for the retreat.

Kay requested that it would be helpful if everyone gave 10 minutes or so to help clean up the space after we adjourn the meeting.

The meeting ended shortly before 4 p.m.

Gather at the Firepit for the Spirit Walk event around 4:45 p.m.