

Peggy Renfroe



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I was twenty-seven and new to Eugene when a friend invited me to the OCF. He managed to talk to someone who let us in. We built our camp deep in a blackberry patch behind a teepee. To find my way back to our camp, I wandered lost while totally in awe of the scene. It was then that I realized that this was a community that I wanted to be part of.

I volunteered with security and worked in several booths. In the eighties, I helped Michael Went construct the horse corral, which is still standing. I practiced Reiki, the healing arts, and measured auras with a dowsing rod in my booths, and now I am an Elder.

I am an artist. I have worked in the healing arts for thirty years, including hospice care, before retiring. I have always been an assertive advocate devoted to helping folks unable to stand up for themselves. I have accomplished hard tasks through determination alone. I have been a Hoedad tree planter and worked other manual labor jobs. I love nature, especially the part that relates to the Kalapuya land where we gather each year.

You may ask why I am running for the board. I will say initially that I am devoted to the well-being of the OCF and the family we have created. It seems to me that there are issues that need to be readdressed. Perhaps we should reexamine the policies that have guided us. There is a need to look at the policies that have led us to where we are now. I served with two non-profits

in the past. Currently, I am studying the requirements for state non-profits and, of course, the OCF guidelines.

In the 80s, Robert DeSpain joined others in implementing the community-building practices that Marshall Landman had used to establish the Community Village. Those were days when there was a kind of harmony that has changed a bit. An amendment was added to the bylaws in 2012, allowing members to be removed. The list of those expelled, banned, or left because of toxicity has grown long and heartbreaking. Forty years before the amendment, there was only one expulsion. Many of those named are founders. Family who have dedicated their hearts and souls to the OCF. They are not disposable volunteers. However, I have noticed that entire crews seem to be missing - Archaeology and DEI issues come to mind. Several crafters have similar complaints. The monetization and digitization are ostracizing a portion of our members. As an OCF board member, I would seek solutions to meet those needs. In the early days, there was a caveat to offer suggestions to fix "wrongs". Now it's confusing to speak of change because avenues don't appear so easily.

I would like to see the OCF facilitate community-building workshops that might help unite the Fair and assist in developing a reparative process to heal some of the rifts, eliminate stifling policies, and advance a well-thought-out transformation back to unity and collaboration. Hybrid board meetings are essential for inclusivity and the community aspect. I would like to see potlucks and for membership to have monthly hybrid meetings, similar to the board meetings, beyond the annual membership meeting. We can initiate change by working together to build a stronger community with transparency.

All of our voices are important, and we need to hear each other in ways that utilize our communal resources and our ability to work together to unify our Family. We did it before, and with a blueprint from the past, we can do it again. I can help with the reparative process. Please help me reunite our family.