

OPINION

Ideological diversity in the Applegate Valley

BY JIM REILAND

Shortly after Donald Trump won the 2016 presidential election, I heard a radio interview with a New York liberal who couldn't believe that Trump had won because she "didn't know a single person who voted for him." After Joe Biden won the 2020 presidential election, a Georgia conservative claimed during another radio interview that the election "must have been stolen" because he "didn't know a single person who voted for Biden."

Both voters expressed the disbelief and disappointment that roughly half of the country feels every four years. After recovering from the shock of losing, I hope they realized that their sample size—the people they know—was perhaps too small and lacking ideological diversity. They're not alone—we all tend to spend time with people who think like us because it's more comfortable, even as it contributes to our living in a bubble. So how did our neighbors vote?

If the 2020 and 2024 presidential elections indicate how voters lean (left or right), then the Jackson and Josephine county portions of the Applegate Valley lean right. As a whole, Applegate precincts are slightly more conservative than their respective counties.

Voting records from the County Clerks' offices show:

- In 2020, Jackson County voted 50.23 percent for Trump, 46.77 percent for Biden, and 3 percent for third-party candidates.
- In 2024, Jackson County voted 51.64 percent for Trump, 45.22 percent for Harris, and 3.15 percent for third-party candidates.
- In 2020, Josephine County voted 61.48 percent for Trump, 35.73 percent for Biden, and 2.79 percent for third-party candidates.
- In 2024, Josephine County voted 62.72 percent for Trump, 34.11 percent for Harris, and 3.16 percent for a third-party candidate.

Since some Applegate Valley precincts include areas near Medford, Jacksonville, and Grants Pass that lie outside the Applegate Valley, it's impossible to determine with complete accuracy how the Applegate votes. However, it's likely that Applegate voters are proportionally similar to their respective counties.

- In 2020, Jackson County Applegate precincts voted 52.7 percent for Trump, 44.43 percent for Biden, and 3 percent for a third-party candidate.
- In 2024, they voted 56 percent for Trump, 40 percent for Harris, and 4 percent for third-party candidates.
- In 2020, Josephine County Applegate precincts voted 64.9 percent for Trump, 33.1 percent for Biden, and 2 percent for third-party candidates.
- In 2024, they voted 65.9 percent for Trump, 31.1 percent for Harris, and 3 percent for third-party candidates.

To avoid being blindsided by election results, we might ask, "Does our circle of friends and acquaintances reflect the ideological diversity of our community?" Being able to talk about our differences also illuminates how much we have in common. Similarly, organizations with a nonpolitical mission to serve our community (which probably accounts for most of the organizations in the Applegate Valley) might ask, "Do the people who staff, support, and volunteer for us reflect the ideological diversity evident in the voting record?"

If not, why not? It's a question worth trying to answer because we benefit from better knowing the many interesting and delightful people who are our neighbors—regardless of how they vote. And if we're trying to grow our organizations' reach and effectiveness, people all along the political spectrum could also share their insights, talent, passion, love of the Applegate, and financial support.

Choosing to stay in a bubble is our loss.
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••• BIZBITS •••

Chim-Chimney Sweepers. As the season for building fires in our woodburning stoves comes to an end, Brian Stivers, of Chim-Chimney Sweepers, has expanded the services of his business. In addition to cleaning chimneys, he will now clean and repair rain gutters and dryer vents, remove moss from your roof, or blow leaves off it. You can contact him at 541-761-8998 to make an appointment for any of these services. 9 am-5 pm Monday-Friday; 10 am-2 pm Saturday.

Serony Bodywork. Massage therapist Haley Petersen has a new location in Jacksonville—660 G Street, upstairs in Suite D—and a new business name, Serony Bodywork. Serony (her neologism) describes the body after a massage—quiet, centered, calm—"the serene experience of harmony within the body, which can also be felt," she says, "after a sauna, a peaceful night's rest, a great workout, or when lying in tall grass, sunshine bathing your face, a warm breeze waving the grass around you." Haley offers deep tissue massage, myofascial release, relaxation, ashitsu (massage with the practitioner's feet), and Thai massage. \$130 for 75 minutes; \$150 for 90 minutes; \$210 for two hours. To book a session, call or text 541-324-8638, or email hmaylmt@gmail.com.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The wild turkeys

The article decrying the so-called lethal impacts of wild turkeys in the Winter 2024 edition of the *Applegater* is unfounded scientifically and violates common sense. First, precipitous wildlife declines and land degradation are the result of human activity—directly through hunting and habitat loss and, indirectly, through climate change. It is nonnative humans—not turkeys—who are "gobbling up" the land. Indeed, this land belongs to turkeys more than to humans because turkeys do not do unto us as we do to them.

Second, as the writer pointed out, turkeys are here because humans put them here. The turkeys had no say. Turkeys are sentient beings as deserving of respect and care as fellow community members. We are lucky to live with such beautiful neighbors. Gay Bradshaw, Jacksonville, OR

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For advertising information, contact:

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Opinion pieces. Limited to 500 words; no images. Opinion pieces submitted by the same person will not be run consecutively. Responses to previously published opinion pieces will not be published. Must include publishable contact information (phone number and/ or email address).

Letters. Limited to 200 words; must be signed, with a full street address or PO Box and phone number. Only the writer's name and hometown will be published.

Anonymous letters and opinion pieces, reprinted articles, press releases, and political campaign articles will not be published. Individual letters and opinion pieces may or may not be published. All submissions will be edited for grammar and length.

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