

Jim West begins vacation; critics call for resignation

BY NICHOLAS K. GERANIOS
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SPOKANE, Wash. — Spokane Mayor James West began a vacation Tuesday as calls continued for his resignation over allegations of child molestation and claims he offered city jobs to men he met online.

West, a 54-year-old former state Senate leader and opponent of gay rights, last week denied the decades-old molestation allegations but acknowledged he had visited a gay online chat room and had relations with adult men.

He told the City Council on Monday that he would take a leave for several weeks to prepare to defend himself against the allegations raised by the city's daily newspaper, The Spokesman-Review.

"I don't expect him to come into the office at all," said Marlene Feist, spokeswoman for West, on Tuesday. "His vacation started immediately."

West did not say whether he would leave town, Feist said.

The mayor's associates are worried about his health, especially because he has been battling cancer for several years, she said.

"Stress isn't good for anyone at that level," Feist said.

West has faced a firestorm of attention since The Spokesman-Review reported Thursday about his life as a closeted gay or bisexual man. Most of the attention has been negative.

"If all or any of the allegations of sexual misconduct are true, then the mayor should resign immediately," said Patrick Guerriero, president of the Log Cabin Republicans, a group of gay members of the GOP.

Gay activists have been quick to condemn West over allegations that he may have molested two Boy Scouts decades ago; West has vehemently denied those allegations. They have also criticized West's two decades of votes against gay rights while a member of the Washington Legislature.

State Sen. Darlene Fairley, D-Lake Forest Park, who frequently clashed with West in the Legislature, has called for his resignation. So have Spokane City Council members Mary Verner and Cherie Rodgers.

As part of its investigation into the mayor, The Spokesman-Review hired a computer forensics expert who posed as an 18-year-old male high school student in Internet chats with West on Gay.com. West offered the "teen" a City Hall internship, tickets to professional sporting events and other gifts, the newspaper reported.

Additional people have subsequently come forward with stories that West propositioned them.

Gay.com has been posting articles about West on its Web site and also reiterated to its members that it remains committed to their privacy.

"The ability of our members to connect in a safe and secure environment is one of the keystones to the success of our business," the Web site said.

Some users of the site were outraged by the newspaper's actions, according to postings on the site.

"Perhaps the good people at Gay.com might sue the reporter and/or the newspaper who did this article," wrote Tommy9 on Tuesday morning. "I'm sure it is a violation of the terms of use or terms of service."

Spokane City Attorney Mike Connolly has launched an independent investigation as to the validity of allegations that West offered internships in exchange for sex and whether West's City Hall computer was used improperly.

Meanwhile, Shannon Sullivan of Spokane has filed paperwork to begin a recall of the mayor. She said she took the action because she was tired of answering questions about the case from her young son.

"It is my opinion that the allegation(s) against Mayor West are prohibiting him from doing the job we elected him to do," Sullivan said in the petition.

If a Superior Court judge authorizes the recall in a hearing, she would have 180 days to gather at least 12,567 signatures to place it on the ballot.

IN BRIEF

Spokane mayor's fall from grace is rapid

SPOKANE — A timeline of the investigation into Spokane Mayor Jim West:

- November 2003 — West elected Spokane mayor after capping a 17-year career as a Republican in the state Legislature, most recently as Senate majority leader.

- January 2004 — Begins four-year term in what he called his "dream job."

- May 5 — The Spokesman-Review publishes series of articles implicating West in child molestation

when he was a sheriff's deputy and Scout leader in late 1970s and early 1980s. The newspaper also reports it hired a computer expert to track West's visits to a gay chat room, where the mayor allegedly offered a fictitious 18-year-old male a City Hall internship and other gifts.

West denied the molestation allegations, but did not deny visiting a gay chat room and having relations with adult men.

- May 6 — City officials announce they will investigate West's internship program and computer use for possible violations of city policy.

- May 8 — The newspaper reports City Councilwoman Cherie Rodgers, one of the first public officials to call for

West to resign, claimed the mayor called her to tell her he had masturbated in his City Hall office during an on-line sex session. West called Spokesman-Review Editor Steven Smith that morning to deny Rodgers' allegation but acknowledged he is a gay man.

- May 9 — West tells Spokane City Council he is taking a few weeks' leave to "gather my thoughts and prepare my defense of the false accusations leveled against me." An hour later, The Spokesman-Review posts a story on its Web site in which two 24-year-old men claim West offered them City Hall jobs after initial meets in a gay chat room.

— The Associated Press

Oregano's Grill

830 Olive St. • 393-0830
Reservations Available



Wednesday
is Date Night
\$26 per Couple

A Night To Remember

- bruschetta
- caesar salad
- choice of our pasta-for-two dishes
- amaretto creme brulee
- full bottle of Oregano's house wine

TARARIN THAI CUISINE

- Vegetarian Selections • Dine In or Carry Out •
- Lunch Specials • 100 Menu Items •
- Mother's homemade recipes •
- More than 20 selections of beer and wine •
- A short walk from campus •
- Large Free Parking Area •



1200 OAK ST. EUGENE, OR • (541)343-1230
MON.-FRI. 11-3PM LUNCH, 5-10PM DINNER • SAT.-SUN. 12-10PM

Do the math Save money



Lane offers credit courses that you can use for graduation at UO—for just \$67 per credit. Figure out how much money you can save.

Enrolling is easy. Summer classes begin June 20.

For more information about summer classes at Lane, visit www.lanecollege.edu.

Lane
Community College

an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution

ASUO MULTICULTURAL CENTER PRESENTS: THE EDWIN COLEMAN ARTS & SPEAKERS SERIES

The MCC's Ed Coleman Speaker Series celebrates Professor Emeritus Ed Coleman and his contributions to diversify the University and the community as the first black tenured professor at the University of Oregon.



Spoken word by 2000
Grand Slam Poetry Champion

***Bryonn Bain**

with Suckapunch & Turiya Autry

Friday, May 13
Fir Room, EMU
9:00 pm—FREE



With hip hop performance by:

***Blue Scholar**

Friday, May 13
Fir Room, EMU
9:00 pm—FREE



Art showcase by:

***Maceo Montoya**

Tuesday,
May 17
Ben Linder
Room, EMU
4-6:00 pm



Art showcase by:

***Julie Thi Underhill**

Wednesday, May 18
Multicultural Center
Suite 33, EMU
3:30-5:00 pm

Also sponsored by: ASUO Senate, ASUO Executive & Multicultural Advocate, Office of Multicultural Academic Support, Office of Student Life & Diversity Programs, Ethnic Studies Program, English Department

You're always close to campus.

→ www.dailyemerald.com