

Appeal Tribune

50 CENTS • VOL. 136, No. 41

SILVERTONAPPEAL.COM

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2017



SALEM TO SILVER FALLS

Participants cycle from Spong's Landing outside of Keizer to Silver Falls State Park in the River 2 Ridge event on Sept. 17. Participants kayaked the 6.2 miles from Salem's Riverfront Park to Spong's Landing north of Salem, then biked 47.8 miles to Silver Falls, where they ran a 5.8-mile loop of the state park. MOLLY J. SMITH / STATESMAN JOURNAL

Wind, rain greet racers in relay from Salem's Riverfront Park to Silver Falls State Park

JONATHAN BACH
STATESMAN JOURNAL

A more than 50-mile race Sept. 17 took competitors on a winding tour of the Willamette Valley as they raced from Salem's new pedestrian bridge all the way to Silver Falls State Park.

The first-ever Salem River 2 Ridge Relay kicked off in the morning on the southwest end of the Peter Courtney Minto Island Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge between Salem's Riverfront Park and Minto-Brown Island Park.

The first stretch was a run from the pedestrian bridge to Wallace Marine Park, where colorful kayaks then streamed into the Willamette River for a second leg, heading toward Spong's Landing Park, a county park just north of Salem.

From there, cyclists pedaled a harrowing 47.8 miles to Silver Falls State Park, about the same distance as driving Salem to Portland. They wound through idyllic farmland, though some got splashed by afternoon rain.

After the bikes, competitors on foot worked the last leg, 5.8 miles through Silver Falls State Park.

"We consider it kind of an adventure race, where you're basically putting multiple disciplines together, all human-powered," said Chad Sperry, the race's director.

The race is set to return the next two years. This go-round, it attracted racers from Salem, Portland, Eugene and elsewhere, with more than 36 registered to race on their own and 83 on teams.

Unlike many, competitor Dan Davenport was going it alone, nervous before the start of the race about the long bike ride. "I'm on a mountain bike, so that makes it even more fun," the 50-year-old Keizer resident said.

He said he had always wanted to compete in a triathlon but can't swim.

"So I figured a kayak would be the best way to go," he said.

Racers got creative with their team names. One female team was called "Faster in our Minds," while a male team went by "Past-R-Prime."

The first team to actually finish the relay was the coed "Willametteam" from Eugene. Members Ben Marean, Salmon Norgaard-Stroich and Jenn Randall divvied parts of River 2 Ridge between themselves.

Marean, 43, ran from the bridge to Wallace Ma-



A participant runs through Silver Falls State Park for the final leg of River 2 Ridge on Sept. 17. MOLLY J. SMITH / STATESMAN JOURNAL

rine Park, passing off the river section to Norgaard-Stroich, 50, who then passed back off to Marean for the nearly 50-mile bike ride.

Headwinds upped the difficulty on the long ride.

"I was grateful to have the wind to blow away the smoke because the smoke would have been worse," Marean said.

Still, fighting headwinds where they were present "was the toughest part," he said.

After he made it to the state park, Randall took it home, facing some hard uphill sections of trail on foot but ultimately beating the competition.

"My teammates put me in a really good spot," the 25-year-old said.

A former Salem mayor's trip to Japan spurred the creation of the Oregon race.

Mayor Anna Peterson traveled there years ago and found out about SEA TO SUMMIT, a similarly styled race.

"I thought, 'We could do this in Salem, and we

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Former nurse sentenced to 8 years for raping woman

WHITNEY M. WOODWORTH
STATESMAN JOURNAL



Gerig

For the second time in less than 18 months, Christopher Gerig appeared in Marion County court accused of rape and sexual abuse.

He was acquitted of the first charges in early 2017. A few months later, he was arrested on new charges involving a different victim.

This time, the charges stood, and a jury convicted Gerig, 34, of first-degree rape and first-degree sexual abuse. He was sentenced to eight years and four months in prison Sept. 18.

Gerig, a Silverton resident and former registered nurse, was accused of raping and assaulting a woman following a house party in May.

Gerig previously faced criminal charges and the possible revocation of his nursing license after the first set of sexual assault charges against him surfaced in 2016.

The Oregon State Board of Nursing served Gerig with a notice of proposed revocation in July 2016 after they were noti-

fied of allegations that he sexually abused a woman.

According to the complaint,

Gerig allegedly used his nursing education and knowledge to establish trust with a woman then planned a rape-like sexual encounter between himself and her, claiming it was a therapeutic exercise to help her recover from past trauma.

Gerig told the woman they would need to re-enact a sexual assault as a form of therapy, according to court records. Trusting Gerig's nursing education and training, the woman agreed to the encounter.

One week later, she told a friend she felt even more traumatized. The friend encouraged her to report the incident to police and the nursing board, which she did.

Gerig was arrested and charged with first-degree rape, second-degree sexual abuse and strangulation.

Finding that the prose-

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CREEKSIDE CHAT

School reports, music and civic activity

JUSTIN MUCH
STAYTON MAIL

When you have some good news, you want to share it.

That's the impetus behind posters going up around Silverton this week created by Silver Falls School District and carrying the message "Moving forward together...and it shows!"

District Superintendent **Andy Bellando** and Board Chair **Tom Bucholz** stopped into Silver Creek Coffee House on Wednesday, Sept. 20, to share a look at the poster, talk about statistics presented on it and have a Creekside Chat about positive elements within Silverton area schools.

Schools, seniors and music were all focal topics that Wednesday. **Angela Rose** stopped in to share information about Bethany Charter School's upcoming carnival and its



Angela Rose

long-standing tradition; **Jan Holowati** apprised us of the Coats for Kids drive,

which extends a peripheral boost to local school students who need it; **Dodie Brockamp** enlightened us on a host of Silverton Area Seniors activities, including a 50-50 Invitation & Challenge, escalating efforts to allure 50 somethings to join the fun and the senior center.

Meanwhile, the youngest recorded Creekside attendee, 7-month-old **Isidore (Sid) Weitzman** kept a sharp eye on the discussion as Silverton Sidewalk Shindig organizer **Gregg Sheesley** and Silverton Friends of Music President **Sarah Weitzman** shared information about the annual

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Dog saves man from house fire

WHITNEY M. WOODWORTH
STATESMAN JOURNAL

A Silverton man safely escaped his burning home Thursday after his dog alerted him to the flames.

Silverton Fire crews responded to a burning home on the 4300 block of Silver Falls Highway shortly after 7 a.m.

Crews arrived to find fire shooting out of the home's door and windows, catching nearby trees on fire.

Firefighters from Mount Angel and the Drakes Crossing Fire District were called in to help extinguish the two-alarm fire.

Silverton fire officials said the home did not have working smoke alarms, but the owner's dog roused him. Both the man and the dog safely escaped the burning home.

Crews brought in water tanker trucks because of the home's remote location. Firefighters brought the blaze under control

within 45 minutes and fully extinguished remaining hot spots by 11 a.m.

Fire officials said the home and all of its contents were a complete loss, with an estimated damage of \$75,000. There was no insurance on the home. The American Red Cross Cascades Region is providing assistance to the man, the home's sole occupant.

The cause of the fire is under investigation, but officials said it appears to

have been accidental. Silverton fire officials reminded residents that working smoke alarms save lives and encouraged them to check alarms every six months.

For questions, comments and news tips, email reporter Whitney Woodworth at wmwoodwort@statesmanjournal.com, call 503-399-6884 or follow on Twitter @wmwoodworth

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