

## OREGON IN BRIEF

from staff reports

**Brown receives \$500K from national pro-choice group**

Gov. Kate Brown's re-election campaign has received a \$500,000 contribution from a national political group.

Brown's most recent campaign filing disclosures shows the contribution from EMILY's List as her largest contribution to date.

The political action committee backs female Democratic candidates who support abortion rights.

The EMILY's List website shows Brown is one of nine gubernatorial candidates the PAC is supporting this election cycle, calling her "a progressive leader with the experience to move Oregon forward."

Oregon Public Broadcasting reports the influx comes nearly a year after her Republican opponent Knute Buehler received a donation in that amount from Nike co-founder Phil Knight.

As of the most recent reporting, Brown has nearly \$4 million more on hand than Buehler, who spent money to fend off challengers during the May primary.

**Oregon boat captain arrested at sea**

Authorities say the U.S. Coast Guard arrested the captain of a commercial fishing vessel off the coast of Oregon after receiving an anonymous call about a woman in distress earlier this month.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports 38-year-old Branden Vanderploeg of Winchester Bay was charged with assault within maritime jurisdiction and operating a commercial vessel under the influence of alcohol.

The Coast Guard says Vanderploeg was intoxicated and attacked the woman on board the fishing vessel Pescadero. The woman had a cut on her right cheek, a nose fracture and multiple contusions to her knees and arms.

Vanderploeg told the newspaper that he was intoxicated and was in the wrong for drinking. He declined to discuss the assault allegation, but noted there are "two sides to each story."

**Mother indicted for murder in death of disabled son**

A Deschutes County grand jury has indicted an Oregon woman on a charge of aggravated murder in the death of her severely disabled 7-year-old son.

Deschutes County District Attorney Josh Hummel says Tashina Aleine Jordan was arrested Tuesday at a Bend hospital and taken to jail.

Police have previously said the 28-year-old mother tried to take her own life after shooting Mason Jordan on Aug. 20.

She was found unconscious in their home by a family member and had been receiving treatment at St. Charles Hospital.

Jordan has not entered a plea. She has her first court hearing Wednesday.

Jordan was the primary caretaker of her son, who suffered brain bleeds as an infant and lapsed into a coma before reawakening.

He was unable to feed, bathe or dress himself and used a wheelchair.

**Bend city council candidate arrested**

A candidate for Bend City Council has been arrested on a warrant for contempt of court and will likely be in jail on election day.

Ronald "Rondo" Boozell was arrested Friday and police say he tried to ride away on a bicycle because he knew a jail sentence would keep him from campaigning.

No attorney was listed for Boozell in court documents. A court hearing set for Monday was postponed.

Boozell had been ordered by a judge to serve a 90-day sentence for failure to pay child support. Now he faces an additional charge of interfering with a police officer.

The Bulletin says Boozell is a political gadfly well known for his public comments at City Council meetings and for his advocacy for the homeless.

**Hood to Coast chairman replaced**

The founder of the Hood to Coast race has been replaced as chairman days after he was criticized for not mentioning this year's top women's team during the awards ceremony.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports Tuesday that Bob Foote's daughter, Felicia Hubber, has been promoted to chairwoman and is now the organization's highest-ranking employee.

Race participant Emily Pritt says that Foote told her to "talk to someone who cares" when her team complained about the omission.

She noted that the top-performing men's team, walking team and high school team were all acknowledged.

The organization has since apologized for not publicly recognizing Pritt's team or the second- and third-place all-female teams at the awards ceremony.

Hood to Coast says 70 percent of runners in the annual, two-day relay race are women.

**Police "bike bait" program to deter thefts expands**

The Corvallis Police Department is expanding a new program designed to deter bicycle thefts through the use of "bait bikes."

The department says that since January, 10 people have been arrested for theft after they stole a bike that was intentionally placed in the city by police officers.

The police receive reports of nearly 300 bicycles stolen every year, with a total loss of almost \$250,000 per year.

Those numbers don't include thefts on the Oregon State University campus or cases not reported to police.

The stolen "bait bikes" can be tracked and often police see the theft in progress.

Corvallis also partnered in 2015 with 529 Garage, a cloud-based bicycle registration service, and encourages bike owners to register their wheels.

**Group aims to keep pot retailer off splash pad donor wall**

An Oregon group looks to return a \$25,000 donation toward a youth park project because it's from a recreational marijuana retailer.

The Argus Observer reports Megan Cook, chairwoman of Friends of the Aquatic Center, emailed a letter Friday to Ontario City Manager Adam Brown on behalf of the group seeking to return the donation to Hotbox Farms.

The letter reads: "... because the splash pad is an attraction being built for the children of our community, consensus was reached that it would be inappropriate to brand the project with any businesses that cannot legally serve youth."

Brown says Cook asked him about returning the donation, telling him that a number of donors "were going to pull out if the name wasn't changed from Hotbox Farms to Steve Meland," before being put on a permanent donor wall.

Meland is co-owner of the marijuana retailer.

## Cottage Grove troupe for actors with developmental disabilities flourishes

■ One woman's rejection from a part due to Downs Syndrome lead to group creation

By Alisha Roemelung  
The Register-Guard

Monica Venice of Cottage Grove loves to perform in plays.

About 10 years ago, however, the 51-year-old was rejected for a one-word part in a community play simply because she has Down syndrome.

That rejection led to the creation last year of Creative Chaos, a theater group for people with disabilities who have a passion for acting.

Creative Chaos founder Carmen Dowell said this year's group has nine people with developmental disabilities who will perform in the circus play "Under the Big Top!" Each cast member was able to choose their character, including a gorilla, a lion tamer, a unicorn trainer, a bearded lady and Annie, based on the character from the movie "Annie."

The first of several performances of "Under the Big Top!" is less than three weeks away, on Sept. 15. Performances will take place in a small theater in the Opal Center for Arts & Education in downtown Cottage Grove.

On a recent afternoon, Dowell oversaw actors as they gathered for a rehearsal — complete with props, wigs and stuffed animals — in the theater.

The actors, who range from 18 years old to more than 60 years old, worked through their lines. They took turns offering encouraging words to one another and giggled when someone forgot their lines.

Gary Hilgendorf, who will play a clown, is looking forward to the upcoming

"They bring me so much joy.

Just watching them be so happy and excited, and fulfilling their dreams of being on stage fills my heart."

Carmen Dowell, Creative Chaos founder

ing performances. "I'm going to be a clown who juggles invisible balls," he said, smiling. "Last year, I was The Joker. That was pretty fun."

This is the second year of performances by Creative Chaos, which was inspired by Venice's experience a decade ago.

Back then, Dowell took Venice — her best friend — to try out for a play at a community theater. The part was small, and Venice had just one line — "No."

Venice had never been in a play before but figured she could handle saying one word to an audience.

She never auditioned.

As the two were waiting for Venice's turn, Dowell said she was asked outside by the play's director.

The director "asked why I was doing this to her, and telling me that this puts her in a position not to cast" Venice, Dowell said. "At first, I didn't know what she was talking about."

But then it clicked.

"I had never seen such blatant discrimination of someone with a disability," Dowell said.

Dowell and Venice left the theater feeling a little defeated and angry.

But Dowell vowed to continue to help Venice find her place on stage.

"We just kept trying and trying," Dowell said. "And about two years after her first audition, I think in 2012, (Venice) got a part in the play 'Gypsy,' and she finally got to be on stage and feel like she was just like everyone else."

Venice was later cast in four more plays and three fashion shows. Her friends noticed and asked Dowell to help them get on stage, which prompted an idea: Why not start a theater group just for people with disabilities? It took a while to find a rehearsal space, but last year Creative Chaos was formed.

The group's motto is, "Chaos can be a beautiful thing, if you choose to embrace it."

Dowell volunteered about 90 minutes per week for most of August to help prepare the actors for the upcoming play. The number of rehearsals will increase as the September opening night approaches. Dowell, who acts in Creative Chaos productions, also makes costumes and builds small structures for the stage.


She estimates that she spends more than 100 hours per season on Creative Chaos plays — a commitment born of her love for the group.

"They bring me so much joy," Dowell said. "Just watching them be so happy and excited, and fulfilling their dreams of being on stage fills my heart. There's so much negativity and bad stuff in the world, and I look forward to seeing them. We've sort of become a little family."

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