

northwest

Voters Can't Lose

Multnomah County Commission candidates support queer causes

by Jaymee R. Cuti

When it comes to voting in a new commissioner, Multnomah County voters can't lose. The cadre of candidates brings a range of experiences, passion and awareness of issues facing the county to fill the District 2 seat left vacant by Commissioner Serena Cruz Walsh, whose term expires Dec. 31.

Meet the candidates: Jeff Cogen, Portland City Commissioner Dan Saltzman's chief of staff; Lew Frederick, who is on a leave of absence as communications director from Portland Public Schools; state Sen. Gary Hansen, D-Portland; and Xander Patterson, a financial management consultant for nonprofit organizations.

All share a progressive agenda, recognize a

breakdown in communication between the current county commissioners and Chair Diane Linn, and all support marriage equality.

However, their varying backgrounds and emphases bring vitality to a county that deals with issues of dire importance to the sexual minorities community. Multnomah County is responsible for many health and social service programs; public safety; crystal methamphetamine and other drug treatment programs and strategies; the Wapato jail, which sits empty; bridge repair; and many other issues.

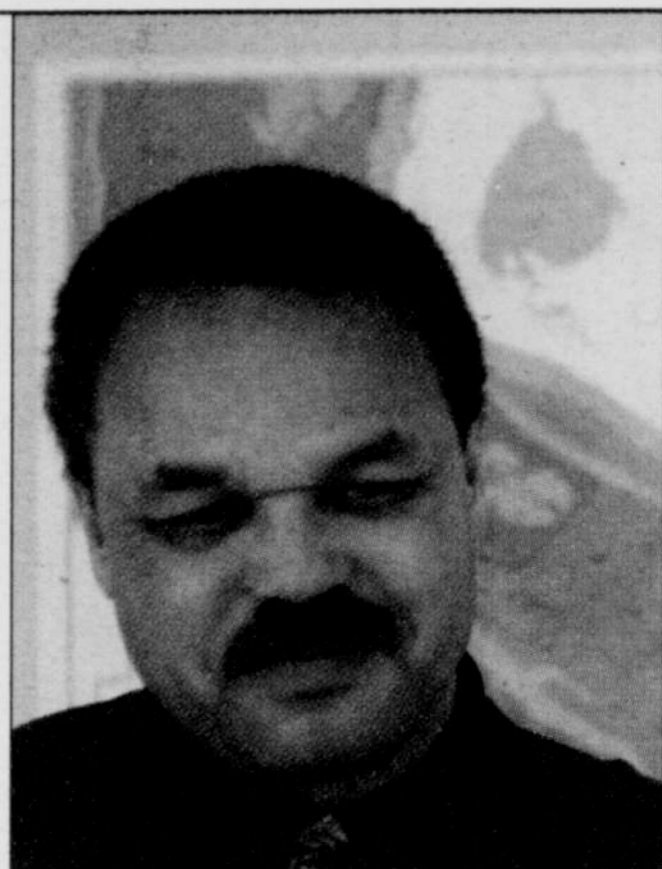
Cogen, 44, claims to be the first organic baker certified in Portland. The native Floridian, with a passion for mediation and finding the win-win scenario, baked and sold soft pretzels shortly after moving to Portland more than 13 years ago.

Cogen was also a member of Bev Stein's staff during her tenure as county chair.

Cogen values green energy and helped create a wind power plan for the city. If elected, he will bring clean energy to the county.

He says he will also implement other creative entrepreneurial strategies to run a county he sees as responsible for many issues disproportionately affecting queer people.

"There are opportunities to bring a lot more



Lew Frederick sees connections between civil rights for racial and sexual minorities.

money to this county by revisiting our relationships. Salem consistently doesn't do right by our county," said Cogen, explaining that he would demand a state subsidy for managing the probation and parole program, which the state is constitutionally obligated to manage. "What I think the county needs to do is pay us for those services or hand those services back to the state." He says the extra funds can be allotted to mental and physical health care for marginalized communities.

Cogen held house parties and canvassed for queers during the No on 36, No on 13 and 2000's No on 9 campaigns and says his core values are rooted in equality, which includes rights for the sexual minorities community.



Jeff Cogen (right) rides in the Portland Pride parade with City Commissioner Dan Saltzman.

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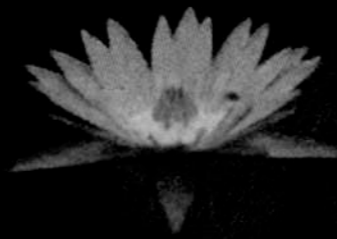
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