

# Oregon GMO label backers sue over rejected votes

By  
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*Associated Press*

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — The sponsors of an Oregon ballot measure that would require labels on genetically modified foods filed an emergency lawsuit Monday challenging the method used by elections officials to make sure signatures on ballot measure envelopes are not forged.

The lawsuit was filed amid indications that a statewide hand recount of ballots on the measure would not result in the measure’s passage. It seeks to force officials to count 4,600 ballots disqualified because signatures on the vote-by-mail envelopes didn’t match those on registration cards.

In the first count of ballots, Measure 92 lost by a little more than 800 votes, triggering an automatic recount. That margin has not changed much as counties have filed their recount results with the secretary of state’s office.

One of the eight plaintiffs named in the lawsuit, Christine Seals of Multnomah County, is a quadriplegic who said her signature was

rejected after she signed her ballot with a signature stamp — which she had used to successfully vote in previous elections. Though voters whose signatures did not match had the opportunity rectify the problem by mail or in person, Seals said she assumed her ballot rejection was a mistake and didn’t challenge it.

Another plaintiff, George Harris of Multnomah County, said his signature was altered as a result of a stroke he suffered this year. He said he couldn’t correct his signature, because he was undergoing treatment during the allotted time.

And Ramon Ramirez, president of an Oregon-based farmworker union, said the issue also impacts Latino immigrant voters who are confused as to why their votes are being rejected.

“For many of these folks who are new citizens and first time voters, it’s very disenfranchising to be told your vote doesn’t count,” Ramirez said.

The deadline for counties to finish the recount is Friday. The lawsuit seeks a temporary restraining order to stop the certification of the statewide recount until the disqualified ballots are counted. It was filed against Secretary of State Kate Brown and Multnomah County Elections Director Tim

Scott.

Secretary of state spokesman Tony Green said his office is reviewing the complaint. Multnomah County elections officials declined to comment.

The measure’s backers say the signature match rule disenfranchises voters. The lawsuit argues ballots should only be rejected if the secretary of state or local election officials can establish they were fraudulently signed or forged.

“These votes are simply dumped. They’re not believed to be fraudulent. It’s a standard put in place out of fear, and it’s a burden to voters,” said Paige Richardson, the measure’s campaign manager.

For a vote to be considered valid in Oregon, a voter’s signature on the ballot return envelope must match the signature in the registration card on file at the elections office.

But the GMO labeling measure’s proponents say voters are never informed that they will be required to match the signature on file. They say some voters have tried and failed to fix their mismatched signature with election officials, and others never received notification that their vote is being challenged.

This election marks the first time in Oregon that a list of problem ballots was

released to the public. The GMO labeling campaign says it discovered the signature problem after making thousands of calls and knocking on thousands of doors in an effort to find more votes for the measure.

The measure’s sponsors say voter identification is already being verified in less restrictive ways in the state, before matching even occurs. Those ways include voters confirming their identities by signing the ballot return envelope and the ability to track ballots through a postal barcode.

Opponents of the GMO labeling measure decried the lawsuit.

“The proponents of the measure don’t like the outcome, so now they want the court to change Oregon’s election system just for them. We will vigorously oppose their effort to try to bend the law in their favor,” said Pat McCormick, treasurer of the NO on 92 Coalition.

If the defeat holds, Oregon will be the fourth state in the West that has failed to pass a GMO labeling measure. A similar proposal was defeated this year in Colorado, which joined Washington state and California in opposing labeling initiatives.

# Dancefarm takes a shot at Dickens

“A Solstice Story,” an adaptation of Charles Dickens’ “A Christmas Carol,” is slated to take place this weekend at Lorna Byrne Middle School. Performance times are 6 p.m. December 13 and 2 p.m. December 14.

The production is part of a new Oregon Community Foundation grant program titled Studio to School and will include students from Evergreen Elementary’s Everstars Performance Troupe, Lorna Byrne Middle School’s (LBMS) Art Novas Performance Troupe, IVHS ArtStars Performance Troupe and the dancefarm players.

Artistic Director Gina Angelique LoPreste states,

“This is a chance for our community to come together around the telling of an important holiday classic. Learning about the archetypes of Scrooge and Tiny Tim is a welcome addition for any household endeavoring to find true holiday spiritedness.”

Possibly the first intergenerational theater event ever performed in the Illinois Valley, the adaptation as related by LoPreste, is as follows.

“Three teenagers meet up on the streets of Cave Junction. Due to unfortunate circumstances, they’re stuck out in the cold on Christmas Eve, and they decide to tell a seasonal story. They settle on the tale of mean old Scrooge

who hoarded all his money and interacted with the world with as much meanness as he could muster. Three ghosts visit him and scare the ‘dickens’ out of him. It is these encounters with other worldly spirits that help him reach a catharsis. Re-invigorated with meaning and passion for the gift of life, Scrooge sets out on a path of generosity.”

LoPreste states, “There will be acting, singing, and dancing; but most importantly the telling of a beautiful holiday story that can illuminate the true meaning of the holiday to so many.”

Performers include Lilyana Rain as Scrooge, Kaci Elder as Cratchett, Ryan Forsythe

as Mrs. Cratchett and Daniel Cole as Tiny Tim. The Ghost of Christmas Past is played by Isadora Millay and the Ghost of Christmas Present is played by Nicholas Reynolds. The three teenage narrators are Na’amah Ocean, Leticia Hearn and Caleb Mayville.

LoPreste concludes, “Part of what is beautiful is the coming together of 4 new performing arts programs: the ArtStars, ArtNovas, Everstars, and the dancefarm players, all working together to create a new holiday tradition for the region.”

There are no advance ticket sales or reserved seats. Tickets are available at the cafeteria door, and all tickets

are “Pay What You Can” so that all community members can attend and enjoy the show!

The production is the first in the LBMS Studio to School Performing Arts Program and is co-sponsored by dancefarm, Evergreen Elementary, Illinois River Valley Arts Council and the Illinois Valley Community Development Organization. For further information, contact dancefarm program manager Chris Hall at 541-415-8010.

Out of 53 competitors statewide, only 18 Studio to School programs were awarded 3-year grants by Oregon Community Foundation (OCF). The foundation is

looking at these 18 different models with the anticipation that they’ll be able to expand the Studio to School idea across the state.

“We have two main missions,” explains Michelle Boss Barba, OCF’s program officer for arts and culture. “One is to improve quality of life in Oregon and the other is to promote effective philanthropy.”

OCF works with businesses, organizations and individuals to create charitable funds and currently manages over 1,700 funds supporting community causes statewide and awards over \$60 million in grants and scholarships annually.

# Artisans’ Holiday Faire kicks off

The fourth annual Artisans’ Holiday Faire will return to the Josephine County Building this weekend. An outgrowth of Second Friday ArtWalk, the Illinois River Valley Arts Council sponsors this event, which features live music and a variety of handcrafted gifts and stocking stuffers.

Jewelry art will include beaded works by Roxanna Chestney and Joyce Dodson; wire wrapped stone pieces by Tina Christensen and Skye Dillon; and Beloved Bee hammered metal jewelry and sculptural pieces by Brianna Kochick. Oregon Dream Weaver Christine Murphy will offer jewelry and photography and Cat Man Do! owner Cathy Slavin will feature copper wire and metal jewelry.

Collaged ornaments by Rebecca Pearson and fiber art, bamboo pendants and card wallets by Design Factotum owner Patti Culver will grace one corner of the room. Additional fiber art includes hand woven Alpaca rugs by Shahoma McAlister and clothing, fiber art and body products from

Siskiyou Alpaca. Alan Laurie will be selling snowflake glass bead ornaments.

Must B Felt owner Rhonda Lynn will offer knitted and crocheted items and clothing and Jill Gruenberg will have fiber art, pillows and pot holders. Bonnie Campanoli will again offer her popular teddy bears and baby clothes. Kat Alley will be selling knitted hats and scarves and handmade soaps.

Author Kindi Fahrnkopf will be selling her books, including “Takilma Tales” and Nicole Rensenbrink will be selling her latest young adult novel “The Girls of Sawyer’s Crossing.”

Unique home décor items by Hanne Granny’s Rustic Raggedies owner Hanna Smith; and Angela Franklin’s Fair Ophelia Designs, including epheria magnets, plant medicines and redesigned vintage clothing, both offer sure to please gifts. Leather Back Sensations owner Maggie Haskell will be selling leather pillows and blessing bags and Sierra Hanni will have a selection of art cards.

Multi-blue ribbon winner Donnalee Smith will present a selection of jams, jellies, baked goods and kitchen accessories; and Sandy’s Essentials owner Sandy Brierty will feature wildcrafted planters, holiday décor and oils. Siskiyou Mountain Herbs owner Deb Lukas will be selling health and beauty products and fiber art hats. Snapdragon Medicine owner Karin Rohland will offer wildcrafted herbal tinctures and salves.

Stitchery artists include Lynn’s Designer Aprons and A Different Drummer, one of a kind aprons and gift linens by DeeAnn Qualls. Seasons ‘N Time owner Tamara Smith will offer representative samples from her Kerby shop, including clothing, fine arts, fiber and paper art and jewelry.

Grants Pass artist Dan Johnson will be rendering fine art charcoal portraits while-you wait.

Refreshments will be available, including hearty soups and baked goods. Non-profit fundraiser activities will include candy

sales for Rusk Ranch Nature Center and a free children’s book giveaway by Josephine Community Libraries, LLC. In addition, UCAN will be available for healthcare insurance sign-ups.

Hours on December 12 are 5 to 8 p.m. and the evening’s live music includes student singing groups The Honey Bees and Blossom Bees at 5 p.m. directed by B. Wishes. At 6 p.m. the IVHS Choir will perform, directed by Derrick Hawks. Open Mic rounds out the evening with caroling song books available.

Hours on December 13 are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Rogue Bass Quintet, led by T. Lund will play in front of the County Building on Saturday morning from 10 to noon. Alan Eisner will play the piano starting at noon in the great hall, followed by vocalist Kris Wildman, accompanied by Nancy Lewis at 1 p.m. Open Mic caroling is scheduled for 2 p.m. and the day’s entertainment will conclude with the popular Celtic duo Anwyn and George Leverett from 3 to 4 p.m.

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