

Secretary of State

Audits, elections and archives, oh my!

So when you mark your ballot for Oregon secretary of state in the primary election this month, will you know exactly what that office does?

Some fired-up candidates are in the race, but echoing the Democratic race for the presidential nomination, Oregon's Democratic candidates for secretary of state are similar in a lot of ways. There are only a few small details in their official platforms to separate them. So the question is: Who is going to get the most done in office?

In Oregon, the secretary of state is the person next in line to be governor if something unfortunate happens. Moreover, many politicians see the office as a stepping-stone to becoming the governor via election as former Govs. Barbara Roberts and Tom McCall did.

Oregon is one of only four U.S. states that do not have the position of lieutenant governor. In most states, if something happens to governor, the lieutenant governor takes over (like that whole unfortunate Elliot Spitzer prostitution thing — Gov. Spitzer stepped down, and Lt. Gov. David Paterson found himself in charge).

Oregon has had a secretary of state since it became a state (though the original title was the somewhat less illustrious "clerk and recorder"). The first politician to hold the office in Oregon called "secretary of state" went by the memorable name of Theophilus Magruder. There is no record of what party he belonged to, but the second person to hold the office was a Democrat and had the equally intriguing name of Kintzing Pritchette. He was the first secretary of state to go on to hold (briefly, for about a month) the office of governor.

In the coolest name category for this election is former Eugene TV newscaster Rick Dancer, the only candidate listed as running for secretary of state in the Republican primary.

There have been efforts in the past to

add the position of lieutenant governor to Oregon's roster of officials. As recently as the 2007 session, the Oregon House approved House Joint Resolution 3, which proposed a constitutional amendment creating the office of lieutenant governor be placed on the primary ballot. HJR 3 got hung up in committee, but this wasn't the first time the issue has come up in the Legislature and probably won't be the last.



The secretary of state doesn't just sit around twiddling his or her thumbs waiting to become governor. The office has some key duties. Oregon's outgoing Secretary of State Bill Bradbury supervises elections, oversees audits of state programs, directs the state archives and administers the formation of corporations and other businesses.

The secretary of state also serves on the State Land Board, which oversees the lands given to the state by Congress for "educational uses" when Oregon became a state. And finally, the holder of the office serves on Oregon's Sustainability Commission. Sustainability has emerged as a key issue for the Democratic candidates.

Whoever wins the Democratic primary will be pitted against Dancer in November. Three of the Democratic candidates are currently state senators, and one candidate, Paul Damian Wells, lists himself as a "voter advocate." Wells' platform is making the office of secretary of state nonpartisan. Wells has been running for statewide office for 14 years, and according to his website, "They are still ignoring me."

Sen. Rick Metsger is a candidate who has already turned a television career into political office. After 16 years as an anchorman in Portland he ran for state Senate

as maintaining integrity in elections and government efficiency through audits, and she is a strong advocate for sustainability in protecting natural resources. Like the other candidates, she is big on improving funding for Oregon's schools.

Although Brown has been deemed by Democratic pundits as the most electable of the candidates, voters nationwide appear to favor candidates who lend a little more excitement to the debate or aren't "typical politicians."

Eugene's own Sen. Vicki Walker has been called everything from "firebrand" to "fearless" and has been noted for her tendency to "stand up to powerful interests." Walker has been a watchdog on issues from ending the use of dangerous wire glass in schools to racial profiling. She writes, "I'm running for secretary of state because no office more fundamentally defines the difference that one person can make — if she has the courage."

Courage isn't an issue for Walker. In 2003 she exposed questionable practices by the State Accident Insurance Fund (SAIF). SAIF Corp. secretly paid \$1.5 million for lobbying to ex-Gov. Neil Goldschmidt and former House Speaker Larry Campbell.

Walker provides the most detail on her campaign promises on her campaign website and also offers a 16 page "Counting for Oregon" booklet laying out her plan and her past successes holding big business accountable. She too focuses on government accountability, elections, auditing government spending and natural resource management.

Bill Bradbury has added a little spice to this year's election in his duties supervising the elections division. In his letter to voters, on page two of the voter's pamphlet, he accidentally provided a 1-800 number that leads callers to a talk-line that promises men that they can talk to "students and housewives" who "love nasty talk as much as you do."

The correct number to get help with any questions about your ballot is (866) 673-8683. Happy voting. **EW**

The secretary of state is the person next in line to be the governor.

and won in 1998. His campaign website lists "sustainable development" as one of his top issues, which may raise an eyebrow with anti-development conservationists.

Metsger also has on his list his goals to protect tax dollars through increased audits, and keep Oregon's ballots on paper and not electronic. Like perennial candidate Wells and Republican Dancer, Metsger supports making the secretary of state's office nonpartisan (the other Democratic senators in the race do not).

Sen. Kate Brown is the candidate with the most donations and the most endorsements, ranging from Basic Rights Oregon to the Oregon League of Conservation Voters. Similarly to Metsger, she lists her main issues

BUY • SELL • TRADE
GUILT-FREE
Fashion

Buffalo
EXCHANGE
New & Recycled Fashion

131 E. 5th Ave. (between Oak & Pearl) 687-2805
BUFFALOEXCHANGE.COM

OLEM ALVES
INNER LIMITS
SAT MAY 10 at 9:30 PM
LIVE MUSIC AT BEL AMI ALWAYS FREE! NO COVER!

WED MAY 14 at 8:30 PM
BARBARA DZURO

DAILY SPECIALS!
BREAKFAST & LUNCH at the

MIDTOWN BISTRO **THAT'S GREAT SOUP!**

SPECIAL
Mushroom, Onion Sausage Pizza

*** Soup**
* Organic Chicken, Mushroom and Rice
* Potato Leek

www.midtownmarketplace.com
AFFORDABLE BREAKFAST & LUNCH MENUS
COMFORTABLE ATMOSPHERE WITH FREE WI/FI
1591 WILLAMETTE STREET ★ (541) 485-6267