



THE REDMOND Spokesman

A special good morning to subscriber Robert and Anne Bohac

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MAY ELECTION

Candidates line up for Redmond School Board

School district board seats are popular on Central Oregon ballots this year; meanwhile, all 4 COCC incumbents are running unopposed

BY JACKSON HOGAN
The Bulletin

Four of Central Oregon's smaller school districts will see at least one contested school board race in the May 18 special election.

The most heated competition is in the Redmond School District, with nine candidates — only one of which is an incumbent — running for three seats.

The four incumbents for the Central Oregon Community College Board of Directors

are all running unopposed. And due to a Crook County School District board member abruptly resigning last week, the deadline to apply for that seat was extended to March 24.

Redmond School Board

With Redmond School Board members Rick Bailey and Travis Bennett choosing to not seek reelection, Central Oregon's second-largest school district will see at least two new faces come July 1. Bailey and Bennett served five and

eight years on the board, respectively.

The lone incumbent running for reelection is Shawn Hartfield, a COCC instructor who was appointed to the board in 2015.

Her challenger is Stephanie Hunter — a behavioral specialist who works with children and adults with disabilities with Redmond-based nonprofit Opportunity Foundation of Central Oregon. Hunter also serves on Redmond School District's equity task force, according to Deschutes County documents.

The board's second seat has four candidates — the most for any school board race in Central Oregon this year.

The candidates are stay-at-home mom Lacey Butts, Bank of America Redmond assistant

branch manager Michelle Salinas, flooring company owner Michael Summers and Michelle Visinoni, an office assistant and former preschool teacher. None of these four candidates has held elected office, according to county documents.

The third Redmond board seat has three candidates. One is Jill Cummings, the vice president and market development officer for Summit Bank. Health care administrator Lavon Medlock is also running, along with Ron Osmundson — co-owner of a day-care facility, assistant football coach for Ridgeview High School and a Redmond City Council candidate in 2020. He finished fifth in that race, out of nine candidates.

See **Board** / P4



Jared Leisek, a scuba diver from Redmond who runs the popular YouTube channel Adventures with Purpose, recovered these two cars from the Willamette River in 2019: a red Jaguar (left) at the Oak Grove boat Ramp downriver from Oregon City, and a Mazda (right) near the Sellwood Bridge in Portland.

Submitted photos



SEARCH & RECOVERY

Redmond man uses scuba diving to recover vehicles and remains of loved ones

BY KYLE SPURR
The Bulletin

REDMOND — Jared Leisek, a former residential developer in Redmond, decided three years ago to reconnect with his passion for scuba diving and use his underwater skills to remove debris from the Deschutes River.

Leisek cleared thousands of pounds of trash from the water in one year and then started to find unusual items, such as guns and vehicles. In 2019 he even found an urn filled with ashes that was accidentally dropped in the river seven years earlier.

He filmed his findings and posted them on the YouTube channel Adventures with Purpose with the help of his wife and two daughters. Eventually, Leisek gained an audience that has now reached more than 1 million subscribers.

People started asking him to travel the country to help recover sunken vehicles and bodies. To date, Leisek estimates he's recovered seven bodies and found more than



Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

Jared Leisek, of Redmond, stands in his trailer full of equipment he uses when scuba diving during recovery missions around the country.

100 vehicles.

His effort to help the environment morphed into a national effort to solve cold cases of missing people and vehicles.

"It's a trajectory I never thought would have taken me here when I

started getting in the water," Leisek said.

Leisek, 45, travels for a month or two at a time with his family and a few volunteers to do water recoveries. He's been to Kansas, Iowa and as far east as New Jersey.

The scuba diving recoveries have become a full-time job for Leisek who relies on donations, volunteers and income from his YouTube channel.

Last month, Leisek and his crew were able to assist law enforcement

officials in Portland and recover the body of 57-year-old Antonio Amaro-Lopez, who died after driving his car off the Glenn Jackson Bridge in a winter storm.

Leisek said he finds submerged vehicles using two sonar systems and three different screens while floating slowly at 1 to 2 mph in a small boat.

"I have my little inflatable boat that I have decked out with sonar to be able to pinpoint a vehicle," Leisek said. "Antonio was inside (his car) and they were able to bring Antonio home that night."

Leisek said recoveries involving bodies are humbling and he becomes emotionally invested with the families of the deceased. He is honored to be the person to bring a resolution.

"It comes down to being able to do something that others cannot and to give answers to families who would never receive those answers," Leisek said.

Sarah Clark, an owner of Central Oregon Diving in Bend, said her company helped Leisek start diving locally three years ago. The company offered Leisek air and gear at a discount as he kept finding trash in the Deschutes River, Clark said.

"We've been there supporting him with whatever we could do to further his environmental impact," Clark said.

See **Diver** / P6

Spokesman Calendar

Events in and around Redmond

The Redmond Spokesman welcomes event information for its community calendar. Submissions are limited to nonprofit, free and live entertainment events. Deadline is 5 p.m. Thursday for the following Wednesday's paper. Items are published on a space-available basis and may be edited. Contact us at news@redmondspokesman.com or fax 541-548-3203.

ONGOING

Big Butte Challenge: Hikers and runners will summit five buttes in Central Oregon, going at their own pace whenever their schedule allows using a GPS-enabled activity tracker to submit efforts before the deadline; through May 31; \$60; Central Oregon; go.evnt.com/752281-1 or 541-350-4635.

WEDNESDAY 3/24

Fitness 4 Life with Diane: This class is 20 minutes of low impact moves, 20 minutes of strength exercises designed to increase range of motion and 20 minutes of balance and flexibility; 7:45-8:45 a.m.; \$3.50; online; raprd.org or 541-548-7275.

Powercut Plus with Juliane: This weightlifting class uses free weights, resistance bands and fitness balls along with great music to get you

through an hour of head-to-toe muscle work. Cardio intervals are interjected between strength sets. Offered online or in-person (limited capacity); 9:15-10:15 a.m.; \$3.50; RAPRD Activity Center, 2441 SW Canal Blvd., Redmond or online; raprd.org or 541-548-7275.

Chinese Experience in America — Kam Wah Chung: Hear how the story of two Chinese gentlemen in early John Day reveals a more realistic version of Chinese experience with Don Merritt, curator and archaeologist at Kam Wah Chung State Heritage Site; 3-4 p.m.; online; go.evnt.com/752251-0 or 541-312-1029.

High Desert Stampede — Slack: The annual indoor professional rodeo will include bronc riding, calf roping and more. In-person tickets to main events Thursday through Saturday are sold out but will air on the Cowboy Channel. Slack is first come first served; 5-10 p.m.; Deschutes County Fair & Expo Center, 3800 SE Airport Way, Redmond; go.evnt.com/755417-0 or 844-414-2242.

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INDEX

Puzzles..... 2 Obituaries..... 6
Police log 2 Classifieds..... 7

Volume 111, No. 30
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See **Calendar** / P6