

## Secretary of state's election duties drive endorsements

By HILLARY BORRUD  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — In Oregon, the secretary of state functions as the state's chief elections officer, auditor and archivist.

That has not stopped candidates for secretary of state, particularly Democrats, from competing for endorsements from special interest groups focused on policy issues from abortion to the environment and labor.

Democratic candidate Brad Avakian, the state's labor commissioner, has so far lined up the longest list of endorsements including NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon PAC, the Oregon League of Conservation Voters and roughly two dozen public and private sector labor groups.

"I'm the progressive in the race, and they realize that," Avakian said of the organizations that endorsed him in the May 17 primary. "Those groups do recognize that the Secretary of State's Office plays a role in each of those issues."

So what can these interest groups hope to gain from a secretary of state who agrees with them politically? The secretary of state is next in line to be governor, a fact that seemed like political trivia until last year, when then-Secretary of State Kate Brown replaced Gov. John Kitzhaber. Kitzhaber resigned amid an influence peddling scandal.

It's unclear what other motivations groups might have, because most candidates would not release the questionnaires they filled out in order to win the organizations' endorsements. However, Democratic candidate Richard Devlin, a state senator from Tualatin, said there is the potential to politicize the office that oversees elections.

"I think you have to lead to some degree and step back from your party identity in those positions because if it's ever viewed as the decisions you're making are partisan, the public is going to have considerably less respect than they do now for the process," Devlin said.

### Interest groups

All of the candidates have said they would increase government transparency as secretary of state, but none of them, with the exception of Republican Sid Leiken, would provide copies of the questionnaires they had filled out for interest groups.

Candidates for Portland mayor have released the questionnaires, including from at least one of the groups that endorsed Avakian.

Leiken's campaign provided a link to the online questionnaire he completed for the Oregon Abigail Adams Voter Education Project, but declined to release others including the questionnaire that earned him an endorsement by Oregon Right to Life.

Republican Dennis Richardson did not respond to calls and has not listed endorsements by any groups. Paul Damian, a candidate for the Independent Party of Oregon, does not list any endorsements on his website and did not respond to a call for comment.

Avakian said he earned the endorsements because of his platform to dramatically expand the role of the secretary of state. For example, Avakian wants to use the secretary of state's position on the three-member State Land Board to push for solar, wind and geothermal power projects on land held by the state's Common School Fund.

### Function as watchdogs

Auditors in the Secretary of State's Office function as watchdogs to make sure government programs function as intended and serve the public. Avakian wants those auditors to begin investigating, on a complaint-driven basis, whether more than 4,000 contractors who work for the state

are complying with equal pay, minimum wage and prevailing wage laws.

State Rep. Val Hoyle, D-Eugene, said through its role in the initiative process the office has a broad and more direct impact on issues important to the interest groups endorsing candidates.

Although the state Department of Justice writes ballot measure titles, Hoyle said it is still up to the secretary of state to decide whether to certify the title.

One group that endorsed Avakian, the Oregon League of Conservation Voters, also has an interest in how the secretary of state handles the initiative process.

The group is tied to the politically active nonprofit Renew Oregon — Oregon League of Conservation Voters executive director Doug Moore is also secretary of Renew Oregon, according to corporation records — which filed four initiatives last year to create new renewable energy mandates and phase out coal power.

Devlin said interest groups also asked him how he would oversee elections as secretary of state. He confirmed at least one group asked how he would handle questions about whether a ballot measure met the requirement that it contain only one issue or subject.

**'... if it's ever viewed as the decisions you're making are partisan, the public is going to have considerably less respect than they do now for the process.'**

**Richard Devlin,**  
Democratic candidate and senator from Tualatin

"That is one of the few determinations the secretary of state can actually make about ballot measures," Devlin said.

Hoyle said groups also have an interest in how the secretary of state evaluates signatures gathered to place measures on the ballot. "They ensure that those signatures are collected legally and appropriately," Hoyle said.

*The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.*

# Astoria man dies at falls

The Daily Astorian

A 34-year-old Astoria man died at Youngs River Falls late Saturday afternoon when he slipped from the top of the falls onto the rocks below, the Clatsop County Sheriff's Office said.

Joseph T. Nestor, who was visiting the falls with his father and brother, began climbing the face of the falls, lost his footing and fell approximately 60 to 70 feet. The witness lost sight of Nestor's body, which had fallen into the river but was soon recovered by a member of the Lewis & Clark fire department.

Clatsop County Medical Examiner Joann Guilianni determined Nestor died from his injuries.

Nestor left behind his wife, Mandy, and two boys Phoenix, 9, and Max, 2, The Oregonian reported.

Crews from the Sheriff's Office, Oregon State Police, the Olney Walluski and Lewis & Clark fire departments, and Medix were at the scene.



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Crews work the scene of a man who fell while climbing Youngs River Falls on Saturday. The man's body has been recovered.

## Candidates for fire chief emerge after interviews

By LYRA FONTAINE  
The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH — The Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District has narrowed down the finalists for fire chief to three candidates.

"I think the board has three very strong candidates to choose from," interim Fire Chief Jim Stearns said Monday. He is hoping for an early May decision so the new chief can start by June.

On Saturday, five candidates came to Cannon Beach and went through interviews with a panel of community members and a technical group made up of area fire chiefs.

Cannon Beach fire district's board of directors then inter-

viewed three finalists recommended by the two panels.

The candidates are Matt Benedict, Helix fire department chief and assistant fire chief and fire marshal of Pendleton's fire department; Gary Woodson, former Pendleton fire chief currently working for the state Department of Corrections; and John West, regional training coordinator for the state Department of Public Safety Standards and Training and former Lincoln City fire training officer.

The board is looking to replace former Fire Chief Mike Balzer, who was fired in October. Balzer has since filed a lawsuit against the fire district claiming wrongful dismissal.

## Two finalists for college president to visit again

The Daily Astorian

Christopher Breitmeyer and Glenn Smith, the two finalists for the presidency of Clatsop Community College, will spend another day on the North Coast Tuesday.

Breitmeyer, the vice president for academic and student affairs at St. Charles Community College northwest of St. Louis, will start his visit with a public meet-and-greet from 10:15 to 11 a.m. at the college's South County Campus in Seaside, followed by Smith from 11 to 11:45 a.m. The two will then take turns meeting with students, staff and faculty.

The college will host a public forum with Smith from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. in Columbia Hall Room 219, followed by Breitmeyer from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.



Submitted Photo

Police responded to a fatal crash on U.S. Highway 101 Saturday.

## Manzanita couple killed in Highway 101 crash

The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH — Two people died Saturday in a two-vehicle, head-on crash just north of Cannon Beach on U.S. Highway 101.

Oregon State Police say the driver of a 2011 Hyundai sport utility vehicle, Gregory W. Heron, and his passenger, Martha H. Heron, both 64 and from Manzanita, were pronounced dead at the scene.

Police reported the driver of the other vehicle, a 2007 Chevrolet Tahoe, Diana R. Feke, 57, and her passenger Jethro J. Feke, 59, both of West Linn, received injuries. Both were taken to an area

hospital for treatment.

According to state police, preliminary information indicates the Hyundai was traveling southbound on Highway 101 when it crossed over the centerline and struck the Chevrolet head-on.

Highway 101 was closed for about 3 1/2 hours while the investigation was conducted, reopening at 7:20 p.m.

State police were assisted by the Clatsop County Medical Examiner, Cannon Beach Fire Department, Cannon Beach Police Department and the state Department of Transportation.

The cause of the crash is still under investigation.

## The art of being a working artist.

Two local artists talk about their painting and the business of art  
APRIL 28



Darren Orange



Eric Weigardt

Based in Ocean Park, Weigardt is a nationally eminent watercolorist. Based in Astoria, Orange has been described as a 21st Century painter in a 19th Century skin. Using illustrations of their own work, Weigardt and Orange will talk about their work routines and how they manage the business side of being artists.

### TO ATTEND:

For Members: Dinner & Lecture: \$25 each; Lecture only: no charge

For Non-Members: Dinner & Lecture: \$35 each; Lecture only: \$15 ea.

Appetizers will be available at 6 p.m. • Dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m.

The speaker will begin after the dinner service is complete and non-dinner members and guests of the audience take their seats.

Forum to be held at the CMH Community Center at 2021 Exchange St., Astoria.

**LIMITED SEATING**  
RESERVE YOUR SPACE TODAY!

## ColumbiaForum

FOR RESERVATIONS OR TO JOIN COLUMBIA FORUM CONTACT:  
Holly Larkins at 503.325.3211 ext. 227 or forum@dailystorian.com by April 25, 2016

Columbia Forum is sponsored by:

The Daily Astorian • Craft3 • OSU Seafood Laboratory • KMUN-FM  
Cannery Pier Hotel & Spa

## WANTED

Alder and Maple Saw Logs & Standing Timber

Northwest Hardwoods • Longview, WA

Contact: Steve Axtell • 360-430-0885 or John Anderson • 360-269-2500



Pelican Brewing Company is hiring & training staff for the new Pelican in Cannon Beach, opening in early May, and we want YOU on our TEAM!

## NOW HIRING

Line Cooks, Prep Cooks, Dishwashers, Managers, Servers, Bartenders, Hosts, Bussers - All positions!

APPLY IN PERSON ANYTIME AT:  
1371 SW Hemlock, Cannon Beach

ATTEND A MEET & GREET:  
April 16<sup>th</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup> 10AM-2PM

OR SEND YOUR RESUME TO:  
Employment@Pelicanbrewing.com

www.yourlittlebeachtown.com/employment

Questions? Call Stephanie 503-965-7779 ext. 307