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EO file photo

A Pendleton resident drops a donation into a Salvation Army bell ringer's donation bucket outside of the Bi-Mart in 2018. The religious nonprofit, which describes itself as the "largest social services provider in the world," has made headlines recently as the fast-food restaurant chain Chick-fil-A announced it would be changing its charitable giving strategy. Salvation Army and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, which also has local chapters in Umatilla and Morrow counties, will no longer be receiving funds from the restaurant's charitable foundation.

Charitable controversy

Salvation Army, Fellowship of Christian Athletes organizations caught up in giving controversy

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

UMATILLA COUNTY — Bell ringers with red kettles collecting donations for The Salvation Army are a classic sign that the holidays have arrived, but for some, the choice about whether to drop in a few dollars has become as political as it is personal.

The religious nonprofit, which describes itself as the "largest social services provider in the world," has made headlines recently as the fast-food restaurant chain Chick-fil-A announced it would be changing its charitable giving strategy. Salvation Army and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, which also has local chapters in Umatilla and Morrow counties, will no longer be receiving funds from the restaurant's charitable foundation.

"Staying true to its mission of nourishing the potential in every child, the Chick-fil-A Foundation will deepen its giving to a smaller number of organizations working exclusively in the areas of education, homelessness and hunger," the restaurant said.

Many have speculated that The Salvation Army and Fellowship of Christian Athletes were among those that didn't make the cut because both orga-

nizations have come under fire from activists who say they discriminate against members of the LGBTQ community. Chick-fil-A itself has also been boycotted by LGBTQ groups for its founder's stance against gay marriage and for donations to organizations considered anti-gay.

"WE SERVE EVERYONE AND ANYONE WHO COMES THROUGH OUR DOORS"

— Alexa Morris

Pendleton Salvation Army staff directed questions on the subject to Alexa Morris, director of communications for the Cascades region of The Salvation Army. She said the organization does not turn away people in need of services based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

"We serve everyone and anyone who comes through our doors," she said.

Posts that have circulated on social media in recent years tell stories — often anonymously — of discrimination at the hands of Salvation Army employees and volunteers, claiming

they have made derogatory comments, turned transgender people away from shelters if they were not willing to sleep in areas according to their assigned sex at birth, or required homosexual couples to sleep in separate areas while allowing heterosexual couples to stay together.

In 2014, a transgender woman in Texas named Jodielynn Wiley told the media she had applied for a housing program through the Salvation Army that would have involved sharing a room and bathroom with other women. Wiley said she was told by a caseworker she wouldn't be accepted because she hadn't had gender-reassignment surgery.

Critics also point to the Salvation Army's religious doctrine requiring celibacy outside of marriage and restricting the definition of marriage to between a man and a woman. In 2015, the magazine *Queerty* published internal documents from Salvation Army directing officers to decline to perform same-sex marriages.

Today, The Salvation Army's website has a section dedicated to dispelling what it calls "myths" about its treatment of LGBTQ people, stating that it does not discriminate in hiring or providing

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Politicians get in line for secretary of state run

Democrats — no Republican has filed so far — are trying to distinguish themselves before primary

By CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — The job of Oregon secretary of state may not bring fame or fortune, but it's an essential state post.

And politicians are lining up to get it.

The race for secretary of state will determine who will manage oversight of state government performance.

And the next secretary will be responsible for protecting the reliability of the state's elections as cyber threats grow by the day and concerns of foreign interference are paramount.

While the most pressing thing on voters' minds may be the ongoing parade of public servants testifying on Capitol Hill or the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday, prospective secretaries are busy fundraising and trumpeting their platforms.

"I think the secretary of state's seat is one of the most overlooked and misunderstood roles," said Jamie McLeod-Skinner, a natural resource attorney seeking the office. "But it's really the most important statewide office for making sure that government functions well, and that also helps to establish accountability and really building that public trust."

Democrats — no Republican has filed so far — are trying to distinguish themselves as they head into a packed primary.

That primary next May has already drawn state Rep. Jennifer Williamson of Portland, state Sen. Mark Hass of Beaverton, Cameron Smith, recently departed director of the state Department of Consumer and Business Services, and McLeod-Skinner, who mounted an unsuccessful attempt to unseat Congressman Greg Walden last year.

Topics like elections security and access to the ballot are already common themes.

And the candidates portray the race as a high-stakes battle.

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Hass



McLeod-Skinner



Smith



Williamson

Weston mayor shares battle with cancer

Jennifer McClure-Spurgeon fights isolation, terminal illness by posting her journey on Facebook

By KATY NESBITT
For the East Oregonian

WESTON — Weston Mayor Jennifer McClure-Spurgeon is battling cancer, again, and she's taking the battle to the internet, sharing her deeply personal journey to tell a story about what she calls an insidious disease.

The daughter of longtime Union County Commissioner Steve McClure and an Elgin native, McClure-Spurgeon was diagnosed with

cervical cancer a month after taking office as a Weston City Council member in 2013.

"Do you think that was an omen?" McClure-Spurgeon said.

A few months after her diagnosis she had surgery — and then another surgery to address complications from the first operation four weeks later. McClure-Spurgeon said she recovered and had five years of good health — serving on city council, raising children

and working alongside her husband in both their real estate appraisal business and as a leadership trainer and consultant.

In late 2018, she started having abdominal pain. A colonoscopy revealed another tumor.

Given the way the cancer returned, McClure-Spurgeon said, it appears when the original tumor was removed, cells were released into her abdominal cavity,

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Contributed photo

Weston Mayor Jennifer McClure-Spurgeon, a native of Elgin, poses for a photo with her care team as she goes through her cancer treatment.

