

# Neuwirth: Recall vote 'really close'

Recall from Page 1A

The three fire board directors chose to fight the recall by submitting a statement of justification and facing voters instead of resigning.

"We would like to thank all of the good citizens that supported a united effort to recall three fire board members," Neuwirth said in a statement, adding that she was "outplayed and outspent." "God bless the firefighters, volunteers and police who protect us. Sorry we let you down. The people have voted. Enough said."

A volunteer for 30 years before becoming chief and a long-time member of the Cannon Beach Police Department, Balzer was locked out of his office, met with a police escort while

he gathered his belongings and sent home walking in the rain, Neuwirth said in January. She and other signatories objected both to the firing and the manner in which it was done.

## The dismissal

Directors defended their actions, pointing to Balzer's lack of administrative and leadership skills.

The board members stated that the board had a "fiduciary responsibility to those who elected them to provide a high level of oversight, particularly in matters of management and administration."

Balzer was dismissed "when the majority of the directors, elected by district voters, became concerned about his ability to perform the ad-



FILE PHOTO/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

## Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District Director Gary Smith, right, and interim Chief Jim Stearns.

ministrative skills required of the head of a public agency," according to their statements.

Smith had described Balzer's firing as "strictly business, not personal."

In December, Balzer filed a civil suit in Clatsop County Circuit Court against the fire

district, seeking more than \$525,000 in damages and his reinstatement as fire chief. He later amended the lawsuit to seek more than \$677,000 in damages and the reinstatement of his employment benefits.

That suit is scheduled for a jury trial in October.

# Fire Captain Gardner resigns

## Departure comes at time of recall

By Lyra Fontaine  
EO Media Group

Fire Capt. Matt Gardner has resigned from the Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District.

Gardner, who was second in command at the fire department, said his decision was not influenced by the firing of former chief Mike Balzer and a recall election of fire board directors.

"It's been an honor and privilege to serve the community and I wish the Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District well," Gardner said in a statement. "In an effort to avoid speculation, confusion or misrepresentation, my decision to resign from the Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District is a personal decision and one that has nothing to do with the current controversy."

Gardner, who resigned in March, began work this week as plant operator for the Arch Cape Water and Sanitary District.

"In my short time here, Matt was absolutely critical to making my transition easy," interim Fire Chief Jim Stearns said.

Other than the chief, Gardner was the department's only paid, full-time staff member.

"The department is very supportive of Matt and we wish him the absolute best in his future effort," Stearns said. "He left on very good terms.

We would welcome him back."

Stearns said Gardner was knowledgeable and familiar with the district, personnel, policies and procedures. "He was my resource, my go-to guy for everything," Stearns said. "He will truly be missed."

After starting as a volunteer, Gardner became a training officer in 2010, providing training for firefighters, community emergency response and surf rescue teams.

Gardner spearheaded a 2014 effort to obtain a brush truck so the Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District could fight wildfires more effectively.

In 2014, Gardner and Police Chief Jason Schermerhorn were first at the hotel crime scene where a toddler lay dead and a second child savagely attacked. Their mother, Jessica Smith, was later charged with the crime.

Gardner took on daily operational tasks to help fill the void left when Balzer was fired in October.

In February, Gardner was given the Clatsop County's High Angle Rescue Team Member of the Year award.

Schermerhorn said he was "very saddened" by Gardner's resignation. "Capt. Gardner was a great partner between the Fire Department and the Police Department," he said in a statement. "We consider him part of our law enforcement family. Matt helped me on so many different projects and is such a great asset for Cannon Beach. He was a very dedicated and self-sacrificing employee."

# School combines culinary training, Bible study

Chefs from Page 1A

completing his pilot's license, Krizo found his calling when he took a side job cooking.

"God said, 'Hey, you're not a pilot, you're a cook,'" he said.

After graduating from the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York, he has worked in France, Australia, Virginia, Colorado, Arizona, California and now Oregon.

He was executive chef and owner of a fine dining restaurant, cooked more than 1,000 meals per day as a Christian convention center chef, and

also worked as a catering and sous chef.

Krizo said he was "blessed with amazing experiences," but his end goal was to develop an international ministry and a culinary school to help guide and support Christian cooks and chefs worldwide.

The nonprofit Christian Chefs International began in 1998 and currently reaches 2,000 members in more than 40 countries. Open since 2012, Christian Culinary Academy is licensed by the state and can now accept international students. The

academy is now enrolling for classes starting Oct. 3.

The academy has guest instructors, including local chef Jonathan Hoffman, owner of Chef's Table, and Graham Kerr, from "The Galloping Gourmet" cooking show.

Christian Culinary Academy's internships offer students real-world experience in the local culinary industry and a feel for different restaurants, Krizo said.

Students have worked at Stephanie Inn, Newmans at 988, Wayfarer Restaurant & Lounge, EVOO Cannon

Beach Cooking School and the Christian Conference Center.

Culinary school is where aspiring chefs can learn foundational skills to build on throughout their careers, Krizo said.

"You wouldn't want a surgeon doing a surgery right after graduating," he said. "No one graduates culinary school being a chef...that's something you earn over many years of experience."

After graduation, previous students have had no trouble receiving job offers. "Anyone that has ever needed employment has found it," Krizo said.

# Get Lit gathering opens with authors' reception

Lit from Page 1A

Jess Walter will present Saturday night during the prime rib dinner. A Q&A panel discussion, free and open to the public, will be Sunday morning at the Coaster Theatre.

Walter has written eight books, including "Beautiful Ruins," a notable book of 2012 by the New York Times. The Spokane, Washington, native is a best-selling author, National

Book Award finalist and the 2005 Edgar Allan Poe Award winner.

Another Washington state author, Jonathan Evison, of Bainbridge Island, presents at Get Lit after finishing a successful tour for his latest book "This



Jonathan Evison

is Your Life, Harriet Chance!" His critically acclaimed "The Revised Fundamentals of Caregiving" is being made into a film with Paul Rudd, Selena Gomez and Craig Roberts that will be out this year. Evison's other works have received the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association Award.

Eugene-based author Elizabeth Engstrom has written 14 books and more than 250 short

stories, articles and essays. A movie "Candiland," based on her 2012 novel "Candyland," will be released this year. The sought-after teacher and speaker presents at writing conferences, conventions and seminars across the globe, including a novel-writing seminar this summer in Spain.

Full pass tickets are \$85 and may be available on-site or by calling 206-914-1255.

# Dope dispensaries OK'd

Dope from Page 1A

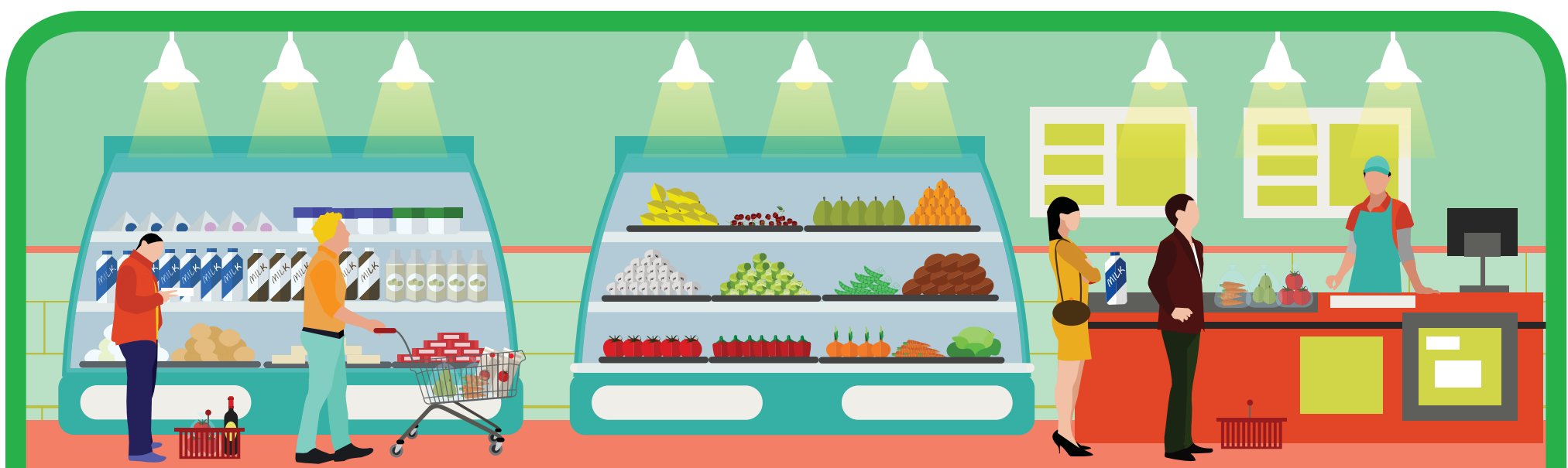
## Initiative ahead?

Among those who opposed lifting the ban was Marlene Laws, who led a petition drive to ban marijuana sales in Cannon Beach. Laws and others have pointed to the health risks, public safety concerns

and impact on tourism.

Along with a vote on the tax, if advocates of a ban can gather enough signatures, it could force a new vote, this time to override the council's decision.

"We will do an initiative," Laws said after the meeting.



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