

Keizertimes

SECTION A

DECEMBER 9, 2016

\$1.00

Council changes mind, absorbs some parade fees

By DEREK WILEY
Of the Keizertimes

In its previous meeting, the Keizer City Council turned down a request by the Keizer Chamber to waive public works fees for the upcoming Holiday Lights Parade.

On Monday, Dec. 5, the city council reversed course and voted 6-1 to absorb \$1,300 for

barricades and staff time by the Keizer Public Works Department to put them up.

Marlene Parsons, who was one of two councilors to change their vote along with Kim Freeman as well as Mayor Cathy Clark, brought up the issue to the council.

All three cited more time to research the issue and the fact

that the \$1,300 would come out of public works and not the general fund, as reasons for changing their minds.

"This doesn't impact our general fund," Freeman said. "Just with some more research I changed my mind. We've done it in the past with the other venue that did the parade before. We waived those fees. We

really want this event here so if we can help them. I know they decided to do this at the last minute."

After more thought, Clark determined the parade was a correct use of public works funds.

"I wanted to be absolutely certain that was going to be appropriate use and needed some

"This doesn't impact our general fund... Just with some more research I changed my mind."

— Kim Freeman,
Keizer City Councilor

time to go back and think about it," she said. "I want to be very careful how all of those funds are expended and make sure they are done in a way that is

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KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald



FAR LEFT: Liz and Nate Dunn released a Christmas album on Dec. 4.

LEFT: The album cover of Merry Christmas by Melody & Truth.

Keizer couple releases Christmas album

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

Liz and Nate Dunn decided in March that they were going to record and release a Christmas album, but it led to serious discussion with their kids, Ingrid, Gretchen and Jonathan, during the summer months.

"We sat down with them and explained what we were going to do, why we were going to do it and why we needed them to be on board with it. We told them it was something we felt called to do,

and we wanted to show them that you can make art but it's going to take everything you have and then some," said Nate.

There was also another lesson they wanted the trio to learn.

"That fame can't be the goal," said Liz.

On Sunday, Dec. 4, the Keizer couple, as the band Melody & Truth, held a release party for the album *Merry Christmas* at their church, Salem First Baptist. It was the apex of what had been

a long journey that roped in numerous friends and relations along the way.

"There's a sense of relief. The first 80 percent is fun, but you get to the last 20 percent and you feel like you're never going to be finished," Nate said. "It's hard to comprehend the amount of discouragement you feel in a project like this."

The album contains 11 holiday-themed tracks and all but two were written or arranged by Nate and Liz.

"The only songs we covered were *Go Tell It On the*

Mountain and *Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas* by Little Big Town. Their arrangements just felt right for the album," Liz said.

CDs, digital downloads and even sheet music from select songs are available through the website melodyandtruth.com.

Nate got his first guitar at age 16, but practice took on a different form than jamming with friends.

"It was a way for me to journal," he said. "Like other people write their prayers as thoughts or poems, I just

started writing them as songs."

Liz's parents had met as part of a band and her father was a professional guitar player. The circumstances resulted in her being surrounded by music growing up.

"I was always arranging music. I would never hear a song and sing it the way I heard it, I would always be looking for what I thought was the right way to sing it," she said.

Music brought them together as a couple and they

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Parade returns Saturday



KEIZERTIMES/File photo

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

The Keizer Holiday Lights Parade, for the first time being run by the Keizer Chamber of Commerce, comes to Keizer at 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 10.

"I think there was some uncertainty as to whether we'd be able to pull it off, but I feel like it's already a success," said

Danielle Bethell, executive director of the Keizer Chamber of Commerce. "Our whole board of directors became very invested in the parade and took of different aspects of it. The fact that it's happening makes it a success."

This year's parade will feature 56 entries, about

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Santa arrived to Salem-Keizer Volcanoes Stadium by helicopter on Saturday, Dec. 3.

GED program coming to McNary

By DEREK WILEY
Of the Keizertimes

Of McNary High School's more than 2,000 students, only 28 or less than 1.4 percent are considered dropouts.

But for principal Erik Jespersen and assistant principal Rhonda Rhodes, that is 28 too many.

Beginning in February, McNary will be the first high school in the Salem-Keizer school district to offer a General Educational Development (GED) program on its campus.



E. Jespersen

a high school diploma but sometimes life circumstances happen that make that challenging so if you're an 18-year-old kid and you've got four credits, we want to provide other opportunities

"This is part of a bigger overall mission that we have at McNary, which is to get to zero dropouts," Jespersen said. "We know our first objective is to get every single student

for them. This is after a lot of different interventions along the way. For some kids getting the GED is a good option and if we can get them back in our building and reengage them and give them a little bit of a glimmer of hope, than we're all about that."

Currently, there are more kids who are credit deficient in Salem-Keizer schools than seats available at the Downtown Learning Center, the alternative school in Salem with a GED program.

"They literally only have a certain

number of desks so what happens is a kid who is credit deficient goes on a waiting list and when you put a kid on a waiting list they stop coming to their home school and disengage from school all together thinking they'll just get that call and get their GED at that point," Rhodes said. "Having them disengage in school altogether doesn't normally turn out very well."

MHS will pilot the GED program with 20 credit deficient seniors.

"We've got kids who out of the 24 credits they need for graduation, have only earned two or four but they're 18 years old," Rhodes said. "They don't

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Christmas tree lighting
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Every kid deserves a birthday party
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K-9 pups get vests
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McNary basketball off to hot start
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