

# Chat

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friendly city label, designated by the League of American Bicyclists. Achieving that status would mark another rung on the group's ladder of bicycle-related achievements these past years.

Charles itemized those achievements, ranging from increasing the bicycle racks around Silverton's downtown area to working with the city (and hopefully Marion County on applicable shared street areas) to realize designated bicycle lanes at some key new street construction areas around town.

Other elements to the plan include identifying designated bike friendly trails and areas, some of which are further marked as kid friendly, and helping to instill a bicycle ele-

ment into the city's overall transportation plan.

After listing the committee's goals and successes, Charles threaded through a description of achievable idyllic routes in and around Silverton, including rides connected to Pioneer Drive, Evans Valley and Steelhammer roads, and a long-term plan to extend into the industrial park.

But a long-range capstone the group would like to see unfold is a designated Rails to Trails project developing along the east valley railroad easement.

"We could see that at some point down the line we would need to accomplish a major fundraising effort to realize that," Charles said.

Notching the more immediate goals and mapping out the route gets the wheels turned in that direction, in Silverton and possibly elsewhere.

"We're building this as a model so we can help

other cities do the same thing," Ed said. "It might help someplace like Sublimity or Stayton with (bicycle projects)."

Potential economic windfall provides a carrot stick to the cause: A 2013 study by Travel Oregon indicates \$400 million was spent by Oregon bicycle tourists in one year, and \$78 million of that total was spent in the Central Willamette Valley.

Reeling that back to Silverton's upcoming festival, Homer Davenport organizer **Gus Frederick** affirmed on Facebook: "It's not too early to start thinking about the Homer Parade! This year, we're going two-wheelin' with the theme: 'Pedal Power - Honoring Silverton's Biking Heritage and Future.'"

As for the multiple-wheelers, Tonya reminds all that the couch races are still vibrant and welcoming.

The Rue family, includ-



JUSTIN MUCH/STAYTON MAIL

Tonya Rue visited the Creekside Chat on July 20 and discussed the "Barb Rue Memorial Couch Races."

ing Tonya's brother **Ron Rue**, will couch-rod it in the very same venerable sofa "Barb's Hair" had engaged the competition with for decades — save some crucial steering and safety adjustments provided by Fall Line Sports owner **Jason Franz**.

Tonya also plans to reinvigorate her annual competition with former

classmate **Dan Feller** and his Silver Crest Rocket Club, who topped Barb's a year ago after Tonya's team held an extended reign of triumphs in their yearly head-to-head tilts.

Old-competitors and new are encouraged.

Divisions are 2-men, 2-women, 4-men, 4-women, coed and over-40. Learn more by contacting Tonya

## Next chat

**What:** Creekside Chat

**Where:** Silver Creek Coffee House, 111 Water St., Silverton

**When:** 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 3 (First and third Wednesdays)

**Questions and information:** Contact Justin Much, [jmuch@statesmanjournal.com](mailto:jmuch@statesmanjournal.com); 503-769-6338, cell 503-508-8157

at [True7104@yahoo.com](mailto:True7104@yahoo.com); 503-873-8616 or on the Homer Davenport web site.

"The more the merrier," Tonya said. "Anybody can participate, and it's always nice to get fresh blood in there."

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# Geers

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Hills south of Silverton, where he built a home in 1851.

The family continued to grow when Homer Davenport was born to Ralph's daughter Florinda Geer-Davenport.

Homer eventually traveled the world with high-profile figures and became a renown political cartoonist.

To document this rich family history, filmmaker Michael Turner, of Scotts Mills, was commissioned by GeerCrest to make a short documentary, "The Pioneers' Children: How the Geer family shaped the state of Oregon," which will premiere dur-

ing the reunion and also screen at the Palace Theater in Silverton following the Homer Davenport parade on Aug. 6.

"That family is extremely complex, mythological," Turner said. "I was hesitant at first because it was so difficult to find resources, but the excitement came when you can see the changes that took place in Oregon from 1850 to about 1920 through the eyes of the characters."

Brooks Geer Ragen, great grandson of Ralph Geer, will also be presenting during the reunion with a slide show he created based on the Meek wagon train.

"As a child, my mother and grandmother made me quite aware of the Lost Wagon Trail," Ragen said. "I've always been inter-



SPECIAL TO THE STAYTON MAIL  
The original Geer farmhouse, built in 1851, still stands today at GeerCrest Farm.

ested in history, particularly the history of the Northwest."

During an expedition to eastern Oregon to learn more about the trail, he

discovered a deal, such as forgotten headstones and actual wagon ruts.

His research resulted in a book called "The Meek Cutoff."

When the family gathers at the Geer farmstead, they will be at the original farmhouse that was, at different times, a childhood home of both Theodore and Homer.

Now, Toler and his wife Erika live on the property and are fifth-generation owners.

The farmhouse is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and remains the oldest single-family owned property in Oregon. A tree (the "Riding Whip Tree"), which was planted by Florinda when she was 15 still remains.

Toler noted that Homer was so enamored of the

farm that during a visit from New York in 1904 he drew a picture of himself on the western wall of the house, above which he wrote "I would like to say that from this old porch, I see my favorite view of all the earth affords. It was a favorite of my dear mother and my father and my grandparents, and why shouldn't it be the same for me, it's where my happiest hours have been spent."

For more information about GeerCrest or the Geer Family reunion events, visit [www.geercrest.org](http://www.geercrest.org) or call 503-873-3406. Tickets and schedule available at [www.geercrest.org](http://www.geercrest.org), under "About/Geer Family."

[annetteutz1@gmail.com](mailto:annetteutz1@gmail.com) or follow at [twitter.com/AnnetteUtz](https://twitter.com/AnnetteUtz)

# Council

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mitted.

For now, councilors simply had to decide whether the property, at 4466 Ike Mooney Road, met the criteria for annexation. Until last March, Silverton voters would've decided that question, but the state legislature passed a new law giving that responsibility to the city council.

Silverton voters typically said "no" to annexation requests, said City Manager Bob Willoughby.

"We weren't closed to annexations, but they didn't fare well with local voters," he said.

It appears Silverton will continue to grow and require new housing, if staff projections are correct. Its comprehensive plan assumes a 2.4 percent average growth rate, bringing the city's population to 15,532 by 2035,

Gottgetreu said.

Growth is what's driven owners Allen and Noelia Flux to submit their property for annexation, they said. Along with neighbor Gregg Sheesley, they complained about the new subdivisions in the Pioneer Drive area.

"We've collectively become an island, and we are being washed over by a tsunami of development," Sheesley said.

The Fluxes moved in when the neighborhood was largely rural. Now new homes and city services surround them on three sides, and they want to move. Annexing the parcel and changing its zoning makes it more possible to sell, they said.

"When we moved there, it was a serene country setting," Allen Flux said. "We don't want to sell, but we've been moved into the city."

## Safer sidewalks

In other business at its

July meeting, Silverton's council voted unanimously to amend the city code to prohibit the riding of bicycles, skateboards, scooters and inline skates on sidewalks in a more defined area of downtown.

Coolidge-McClaine and Town Square parks remain "Walk your Wheels" areas.

Also off-limit to riders are the sidewalks along Water and First streets from Park to Lewis streets, with an additional no-ride zone on the sidewalk in front of the Hartman Building. A section of the Main Street Bridge's sidewalks is also off-limits to riders.

Silverton resident Jacqueline Johnson, whose query sparked the council's decision to update the code, said she wishes councilors would allow children younger than 10 to ride in Walk your Wheels zones.

"The city is trying to be bike friendly, but there are no bike lanes or bike trails," she said.

Mayor Rick Lewis said the city is modifying its transpiration plan to include more bike-friendly features.

Signs will need to be

moved and added to inform riders about the updated Walk your Wheels zone, said Police Chief Jeff Fossholm. Police officers typically enforce the

ordinance by issuing a warning, although repeat offenders can have their bikes, skateboards, skates or scooters confiscated, he said.

# Crash

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Christopher said.

Kovac's passenger, **Torin Eliap**, 31, of Salem, was also injured and hospitalized.

Kovac was uninjured and arrested on charges of DUI and two counts of third-degree assault.

In a statement, the

sheriff's office said it is adding extra patrols. The patrols are funded through Oregon State Sheriff's Association and Oregon Department of Transportation grants.

"Driving intoxicated is a problem we face daily in Marion County," said Sgt. **Todd Moquin**, a member of the sheriff's office Traffic Safety Team. "That is why we participate in grants that allow deputies to work shifts

specifically dedicated to detecting and arresting intoxicated drivers."

Kovac was taken to Marion County jail and held on \$25,000 bail.

The crash investigation closed Silverton Road NE for nearly three hours. The roadway was reopened to traffic.

Email [wmwoodworth@statesmanjournal.com](mailto:wmwoodworth@statesmanjournal.com), call 503-399-6884 or follow on Twitter @wmwoodworth.

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