

Blake honored for volunteer efforts

By CRAIG MURPHY
Of the Keizertimes

Gary Blake may no longer be on the West Keizer Neighborhood Association board of directors, but he hasn't been forgotten.

Blake stepped down from the WKNA at the end of last year after seven years of service. Longtime WKNA president Rhonda Rich remembered that service – plus other work Blake has done – and recommended him as Keizer's Volunteer of the Quarter.

The Keizer Volunteer Coordinating Committee accepted the application. Blake was officially feted as the Volunteer of the Quarter by Mayor Cathy Clark at the April 20 Keizer City Council meeting.

"Gary's done a lot for the West Keizer Neighborhood Association and for citizens in general," Rich said. "He is doing an adopt-a-street program. He has helped us participate in many activities."

Mayor Clark thanked Blake for his efforts.

"This award was established many years ago with the idea that we get to thank and honor those who give so much to the community," Clark said. "Our city motto is pride, spirit and volunteerism. We live by that and appreciate those efforts."

Blake returned the favor.

"I really appreciate the city council allowing this volunteerism to become a real strong feature of this city," Blake said. "And I can't go forward without thanking Rhonda Rich. It's amazing the things she's been able to accomplish. We're fortunate to have her there and the direction she's taken WKNA. I'm thankful for this opportunity to serve. I'm not on the board anymore, but I will continue to volunteer and participate."

In her nomination letter to the VCC, Rich pointed out Blake first got involved with the WKNA when there was a need to replace wooden Palma Ciea signs.

"It was a beautification project that Gary willingly procured the materials, learned how to carve the wood, painted the sign and installed it," Rich wrote. "He is now known as



KEIZERTIMES/Craig Murphy
Mayor Cathy Clark presents Gary Blake with a clock and certificate in honor of his local volunteering work.

"The Master Carver of the WKNA." This project is just one example of Gary's willingness to jump in and help out with contributing to the betterment of our neighborhood."

Rich noted Blake has also helped with the cleaning and developing of trails at Palma Ciea Park, promoted Neighborhood Watch events, organized an entry in the Iris Festival Parade and leads the cleaning of Chemawa Road from River Road to Keizer Rapids Park.

In other business April 20:

- Councilors unanimously approved a resolution exempting purchase of items for the Big Toy play structure from the normal competitive bidding process. The play structure is scheduled to be built by community volunteers from June 10 to 14 at Keizer Rapids Park.

"This matter is before council for brand name exemption from bidding rules, similar to several others for the Big Toy," City Attorney Shannon Johnson said. "Bedford Technology

makes composite lumber and Sound Play Inc. makes various devices that connect."

Johnson noted project consultant Leathers and Associates of New York recommended the strategy as a way to ensure all elements of the play structure fit together correctly, which requires specific materials. The estimated contract price for materials from Bedford is \$95,000 while equipment from Sound Play is expected to be about \$4,900.

- Councilors unanimously approved an application for a change of ownership for liquor license at the former Albertsons store at 5450 River Road. The store became a Haggen this week. The request has been forwarded to the Oregon Liquor Control Commission.

The Albertsons closed at 6 p.m. Sunday. At 12:01 a.m. Monday, Haggen officially took over ownership of the store. At around 4 p.m. Tuesday, the store reopened as a Haggen.

- A liquor license request for the new Chipotle Mexi-

can Grill in Keizer Station was unanimously approved. The request was forwarded to the OLCC.

- Not all volunteers helping to build the Big Toy playground at KRP in June will have to undergo criminal background checks. Johnson said typically all volunteers and employees on such a project would have to go through the process.

"There will be several hundred volunteers for the Big Toy, so it would not be feasible to do (background checks) on them all," Johnson said.

Johnson suggested having project leaders and those doing day care during the five days be subject to the background checks. Councilors approved the idea unanimously without comment, giving city manager Chris Eppley the discretion to determine which positions will be subject to background checks.

Register now for KPD Blast Camp

The Keizer Police Department is hosting its second annual Blast Camp June 16 through 19 for boys and girls entering grades 3 through 6.

The camp is designed to bring local law enforcement and youth closer together.

Children attending the camp will receive safety information, observe public safety demonstrations and much more. Kids will also be able to participate in several different relays and sporting activities.

Registration for the camp is free and will be available at www.keizerpd.com on May 1, on a first come, first serve basis.

In order to allow more children to participate in this event, the Keizer Police Department is seeking donations to help offset the costs. To donate, or if you have questions, please contact Lieutenant Andrew Copeland at 503-856-3463 or copelanda@keizer.org.

In addition to Keizer Police Department, participating agencies include Keizer Fire District, Salem SWAT and Bomb teams, Marion County Search and Rescue, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Marion County Marine Patrol, and ODOT Bike Safety team. Last year, the Keizer Police Department received an overwhelming response from the local community, with approximately 200 children registering for the educational camp.

Free comics Saturday at Tony's

Tony's Kingdom of Comics in Keizer is one of thousands of comic book shops around the world celebrating Free Comic Book Day Saturday, May 2.

Numerous comic book publishers offer free comics through local retailers and many will be available at Tony's. Free Comic Book Day kicks off at 11 a.m. and runs until 8 p.m. at the shop located at 5420 River Road N. Call 503-463-1142 for more information.

In addition to free comics, comic artists Ron Randall, Gary Martin, AnnMaré Grove and Shawn Cruz will sign books and have prints

for sale at the shop. Many favorite heroes and Star Wars characters will also be in attendance.

"Tony's also embraces the chance for all of us to make a by offering extra free comics for donations to the food bank, and through participating in the silent auctions with all proceeds benefiting Shriners' Hospitals for Children," said Tony Grove, shop owner.

Regular updates, information about comic books, and a list of participating publishers and free comics are all online at www.freecomicbookday.com.

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