

## NIKE, continued from Page A1

English teacher and Crystal Apple winner Heidi Tavares was most impressed with the sense of community and family coming from Nike employees that she encountered throughout the trip.

"In my senior AVID elective class we are already a strong family, but I see the need to develop the same sense of community/family in my English classes. When a student realizes that you care about them and their success, that you are there to help, and that it's okay to make mistakes on the road of learning, they are more willing to take risks, try harder, and make you proud. If I can successfully create a family environment in my classes, more student learning will take place because we are all there to help each other be the best we can be," she said.

She is also on board with Jespersen's goal of teaching the current and future Celtics the meaning of "grit."

"I want my students to realize that it takes 'grit' to go far in life, and that sometimes you need to work your way up to get your dream job. I want to teach grit: work hard, dig deep, don't give up, set goals, achieve greatness, and believe in yourself," Tavares said.

As for the \$20,000, Jespersen has a project in the works.

"Our big plan is to eliminate the college and career center and rebuild the space so the aesthetics are different. We want to make it pleasing for and enticing for students and, at the same time, outfit the space with the technology and equipment to invite in local professionals

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to talk about their pathway to a career," Jespersen said.

As part of the Nike Innovation program, Jespersen now has a direct line to one of Nike's current executives, Rachel Ramirez, who is a McNary alumna herself.

"It's valuable because I have her as a resource to talk about issues of leadership and organizational structure," Jespersen said.

Celtic drama director Dallas Myers had more than a little trepidation about the whole thing headed into it, but he came out of the experience with a renewed sense of purpose as the school year begins.

"I had heard a lot of the same philosophies working at Costco, and I thought about how that's great as an administration structure, but then I thought more about how it relates to teacher and student relationships," he said. "If it's theatre the way I learned it, it might not mean anything to my students. If I don't change or I'm not willing to change, then I am going to fail them."

Taken as a whole, he's fully on board with whatever comes next out of the new way of thinking.

"Erik has big ideas, not because the school needs fixing, but he wants to continue to push. If that's how we're going to innovate, I'm in," Myers said.



KEIZERTIMES/Craig Murphy

One of the main reasons Dennis Spencer first bought a 1965 Chevrolet Impala back in 1967 was because of the flow of the rear window (a new design element for that model year) and the one-year-only triple round taillight design. Previous Impalas had a more squared off rear window, while the 1966 Impala switched to square taillights. Spencer found this Impala in a Keizer backyard 20 years ago and fixed it up to match the first one he had.

## IMPALA, continued from Page A1

Over time, Spencer got parts from a wrecking yard. Other parts, particularly the chrome trim pieces, were birthday and Christmas gifts from his children.

"My friends and brother helped me strip it down," Spencer said. "We worked on it for four years. I have a deterioration of the back and have had four knee surgeries. I sat

and sanded the car. Anything I could reach, I could do. We put all the parts in, the motor, the transmission, everything. I could have bought something better and already done, but I didn't want that. I wanted something so that when I was done I could say, 'I did it.'"

Fifteen years ago, the Impala was done.

"I baby it," Spencer readily admits. "It brought back all the good times from our dating and our honeymoon. My wife gave me the go ahead to do it. We take it on Sunday

drives. It is a part of us. I love taking it places, just driving it. It's just the memories. It's part of our lives. There have been a lot of good times. I guess you could say it has got a lot of sentimental value."

Tinkering with cars has long been a passion for Spencer, who was in the same high school graduating class with John Force. Force has gone on to become the most successful drag racer in National Hot Rod Association history and the most recognizable figure in the sport.

"I helped John build his first drag car," Spencer said. "He kept climbing, from dirt poor to all the way up. I have all the respect in the world for that man. He fought tooth and nail for everything he got."

Down the road, Spencer knows his Impala will be in good hands.

"My 13-year-old grandson has a real interest in it. It will be his one day," Spencer said. "We'll never sell it. We've taken our grandson to car shows with it. He loves it."

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