

## Cop: addicts aren't bad people

By CRAIG MURPHY  
Of the Keizertimes

Over the course of nine years, Chris Nelson learned a lot about drugs in the area.

Nelson was a member of the Keizer Police Department's Community Response Unit for two years, mainly focused on drugs, before joining a Drug Enforcement Agency task force for seven years. Two years ago, police chief John Teague brought Nelson back from the DEA. Nelson is now a detective working regular cases with the KPD. Many of those cases, however, are directly linked to substance abuse.

Even with his current duties, Nelson keeps close tabs on the local drug scene and has seen the impact of drugs like heroin.

One of the main things

Nelson learned is the stereotype of drug users being terrible people simply isn't true.

"Many individuals who are addicted aren't bad people, they just have an addiction to an illicit drug," Nelson said. "The young addicts were once thriving in school and the older ones were once contributing to society – the addiction has temporarily poisoned their ability to thrive."

As mentioned last week in the Keizertimes, drug addicts see others die of the habit but don't feel it will happen to them – even after it does happen to people like former Keizer resident Brandon Crist, who was found dead of a heroin overdose in late September at the age of 22.

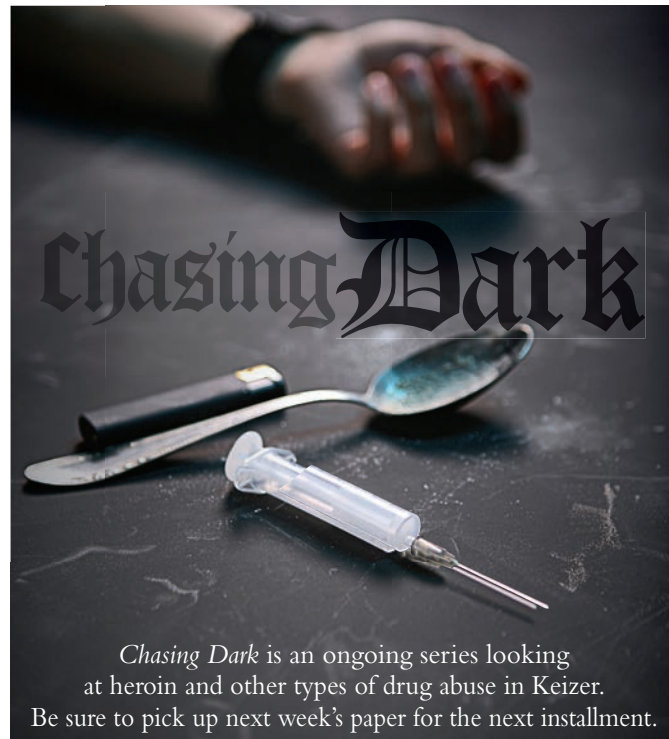
"Heroin is a very addictive and highly-potent opiate," Nelson said. "Unfortunately,

we've seen an uptick in heroin use, which is directly correlated to the rise in overdose deaths. It's extremely disturbing when we see – all too often – the appetite our younger generation has for this poison."

During his time on the DEA task force, Nelson changed his view somewhat in terms of what a solution could be.

"When I was first in law enforcement, I thought the solution was enforcement," Nelson said. "Over the years on the task force, I quickly realized we're taking out one (drug) trafficking organization and another new one takes its place. I learned quickly that if you have the demand for drugs, it will find its way into our community.

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Chasing Dark is an ongoing series looking at heroin and other types of drug abuse in Keizer. Be sure to pick up next week's paper for the next installment.

Remember to set your clocks back Saturday night  
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## Ring site not rock solid

By CRAIG MURPHY  
Of the Keizertimes

Are there different ways to interpret the word no?

Apparently so.

That was on display Tuesday night at the Keizer Public Arts Commission meeting when the topic of art sculptures along River Road was brought up.

Earlier this year, Keizer Public Works employees installed several sculptures along the busy thoroughfare. The one receiving the most attention was the large Boucher Jewellers ring, Creative Memories.

Former Mayor Lore Christopher, chair of KPAC, had championed the idea of having the ring in front of the jewelry store at 4965 River Road North.

Ultimately, however, city attorney Shannon Johnson decreed the ring could be interpreted as advertising for the business and thus in violation of city sign code ordinances. Thus, the ring sculpture built for this year's Iris Festival Parade was placed in front of Sonic Drive-In at 3775 River Road N.

Christopher still didn't agree with Johnson's point of view and made it known on Tuesday. She brought it up as Nate Brown, director for Community Development, mentioned a location needing to be approved for the new Ric Smith American flag sculpture.

"I would like permission from KPAC to talk to the Bouchers about moving the



KEIZERTIMES file/Craig Murphy

The Boucher Jewellers ring, Creative Memories, was placed in front of Sonic Drive-In in September, a move that didn't please everyone including former mayor Lore Christopher.

ring," Christopher said. "You had talked about taking down the sign; in its place would be the ring."

Brown said that had been proposed at one point.

"But we never entertained or accepted that," he said.

Christopher referenced a recent Keizertimes editorial on

the subject.

"I want to talk to the Bouchers," she reiterated. "I've had six people ask me why not move it. They argue how is it different than the bowling ball planters and sidewalk in front of the bowling alley, paid by the city?"

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## Transit, KFD vote ends on Tuesday



KEIZERTIMES file/Craig Murphy

Ballot Measure 24-388 would add more service times to Salem-Keizer Transit.

By CRAIG MURPHY  
Of the Keizertimes

On the national picture, the big election takes place a year from Tuesday.

But locally, two big issues will be decided this coming Tuesday.

The one that's been most talked about is Ballot Measure 24-388, the proposed 0.21 percent business payroll tax to pay for increased local transit service. Officials with the Salem-Keizer Transit District have estimated the new tax, which will be collected starting in 2017, will bring in about \$5 million in new revenue a year.

Anyone reading the Keizertimes lately – or driving by busy intersections on certain days – knows opposition has been strong. Both the Keizer and Salem Area Chambers of Commerce have led organized efforts to protest the payroll tax as being unfair.

In addition to the sign waving, the chambers have also

produced ads against the payroll tax and spoken out in other forums such as luncheons.

While the opposition has been vocal, proponents of the tax have been far quieter. Transit board members have spoken at several Keizer meetings this month, but the small crowds at each means a total of about 25 people heard the message. Discussion of the funding during the Oct. 12 Keizer City Council work session drew a strong rebuke from councilor Amy Ryan, who asserted it wasn't fair for transit officials to campaign for the tax since opponents hadn't been invited to speak.

Few, not even the opponents, have been arguing against the need for more revenue since transit officials will be using the money to fund the restoration of weekend service, extended weeknight service and bus passes for middle school and high school students.

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## Time to walk with a Keizer firefighter



By CRAIG MURPHY  
Of the Keizertimes

First there was Shop with a Cop.

Now there's Walk with a Firefighter.

Walk with a Firefighter starts Tuesday, Nov. 3 at 10 a.m. at Panera Bread, located at 6110 Keizer Station Boulevard in Keizer Station.

The walk is a partnership between the Keizer Fire District and Just Walk Salem. Skye Hibbard-Swanson, Just Walk Salem coordinator, brought up the idea recently at a Greater Gubser Neighborhood Association meeting. Lindsey Walker with Salem Leadership Foundation connected her with Keizer fire chief Jeff

Cowan, who in turn connected Hibbard-Swanson with Anne-Marie Storms, Public Education specialist for KFD.

"The goal is to make it a weekly thing, rain or shine," Storms said. "We'll be at Panera each Tuesday at 10 a.m. The whole goal is to allow anyone to come. It's flat and paved. The walk is about two miles total. Wanted to find somewhere safe."

The walk will go to Kaiser Permanente, follow the pathway down to Starbucks, go to Sleep Country, then go to Lowe's and behind Staples and Petco before crossing to go behind Target, then concluding back at Panera Bread.

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Shopping cart rules  
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Beauty and the Beast  
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MHS boys soccer done  
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## That's a giant pumpkin...



Weddle Elementary School students Kaydence Lawrence and Liliana Vera try to move a giant pumpkin brought to the school by Sandy and Gary Wheeler Friday, Oct. 23. In addition to trying to move the 1,000-pound-plus pumpkins, students at the school got to ask questions about the life cycles of the huge gourds.

KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald

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