

GUITAR, continued from Page A1

won't stop until I figure it out but, when I do, the feeling is amazing," said Cowan.

Cowan is going to be one of four student instructors – alongside Nicole Ecklund, Marissa Rogers and Aarone Marin – who will assist teacher Jesse Deher.

Each of the students will assist on either the acoustic guitar, electric guitar, ukulele or bass. Students do not need to own an instrument or have previous experience playing to enroll in the class, which won't even begin until next month and is nearly full.

"I'm excited about bringing

music into people's lives. It's such a huge thing and it can be for everyone," said Rogers.

Ecklund moved from playing upright bass to the kind you strap around your neck. She's anticipating having her own students.

"It's empowering to know I can use it to bring music to other people. Having the bass has meant so much to me because the one thing that's been really

solid in my life," Ecklund said.

Not to say there aren't jitters. "I'm scared about dealing with teenagers because teenagers can be mean. I'm a teenager, so it's weird," Marin said.

Keizer's Uptown Music is playing a large role in making the class a possibility. For the past couple of years, the business has been quietly operating a refurbishing service.

"We call it Play It Forward.

We have folks that will donate all sorts of instruments and the store donates the parts and our repair guys donate their time to repair them. Then we look for opportunities to give those instruments to the schools," said Paul Elliott, owner of the store.

When Elliott heard about Taylor's guitar class plans, he jumped in. For the past couple of months when customers brought in guitars to donate, the

shop has repaired and stockpiled them for MHS. The store is also donating new guitars.

"The thing that I didn't expect was the four or five people who came in and bought new guitars to be donated to the school off-the-shelf," Elliott said.

The shop has collected 12 guitars and donated two so far. Elliott said Uptown is always looking for instruments.

While Uptown works with

numerous local schools, Elliott said the guitar class feels like the first big launch of Play It Forward.

For Taylor and the Celtics it's a highly visible way of filling in the gaps.

"Everybody needs to know how to bowl or to garden or to hike by themselves in the woods. This is an opportunity for our students to become their own, personal musician," Taylor said.

GROCERY, continued from Page A1

on trying to attract WinCo, which has a distribution center in Woodburn. A "Keizer Wants WinCo" page on Facebook has nearly 800 members.

"I remember when there was four, three, two and then one grocery store in town," Post said. "My wife and I liked to run to Albertsons for these four things, Roth's for these seven things and Safeway for these three things.

"There's nothing we can do to force a grocery store to come here," he added later. "I want everyone to understand that. I wanted to have an old-fashioned city hall meeting where people could say, 'Doggone it I'm frustrated and I just want to let it out.' I'm listening. These guys are listening. If it were up to me, there would be 18 stores here. I like competition."

Mayor Cathy Clark was joined by all city councilors except for Marlene Parsons, a bit ironic considering Parsons has experience in the grocery industry. Clark emphasized Keizer is "open for business" and ready for more grocery stores.

"Properties large enough for a grocery store are properly zoned," she said. "Our planning department is ready to go. The first person to get money and

plans together to say 'we're going to open a store here' is going to get the (customers') money."

Clark noted the recent sale of Schoolhouse Square to Washington-based Bloch Properties (as mentioned in the Jan. 15 *Keizertimes*) and said talk has been about something other than a grocery store filling the former Roth's space there.

Speaking of Roth's, current councilor and former mayor Dennis Koho said he had talked with company president Michael Roth, now a Keizer resident, earlier in the day.

"I've heard from people they're not coming back here," Koho said. "That's not necessarily true. They have one project going on now and they're a small chain. Michael's interested in coming back if things are right when this other project is done."

Councilor Brandon Smith said the main thing leading chains to build a store is data.

"It's all market driven," Smith said. "They do a ton of research. It's got to make good business sense."

Smith also addressed mentions he's seen about tax incentives the city could potentially offer.

"We don't have a business tax and can't do an enterprise zone for this type of business," Smith said. "Some ideas being tossed around aren't things we're legally able to do."

Councilor Amy Ryan recalled growing up in Keizer with several grocery stores.

"We have to have affordable groceries for families," Ryan said. "I'd love a variety. I want to see several stores. But it's not something we can go out and make happen. That's not the hat we wear."

Hersch Sangster has lived in Keizer most of his life and recalled multiple stores.

"There have been a lot of stores here over the years," Sangster said. "We used to have more grocery stores when it was a smaller town."

Several audience members brought up rumors they'd heard, such as WinCo not being allowed in because their stores are open 24 hours.

"That is not true," Smith said. "That's just a rumor."

At one point, Post asked a popularity question.

"I didn't want to go that way, but who here wants WinCo?" Post asked.

A vast majority of those in the room raised their hand.

John Morgan, Keizer's first director of community development, stressed patience.

"The market will correct itself," Morgan said. "Vacant storefronts are costing businesses money. There are 15,000 rooftops in Keizer. There's an overwhelming market demand and opportunity. We just need patience. I'd bet at least one (vacant grocery store building)

will be filled in the next year."

Amy Lietz noted the need isn't for a WinCo in particular, just a place with lower prices.

"I don't want to pay \$4.69 for Cocoa Puffs when I pay \$1.98 for them at WinCo," Lietz said. "It doesn't need to be WinCo, but it needs to have better prices than Safeway."

Larry Jackson wondered if proposed increases in minimum wage in Oregon are hurting Keizer's chances of getting a new grocery store.

"If they're waiting to see what happens with legislation, the minimum wage is huge," Jackson said.

George Grabenhorst with Sperry Van Ness commercial advisors said WinCo is building an 86,000 square foot facility in Albany and is interested in Keizer.

"They like building 80,000 square foot buildings, plus or minus 10,000 with 10 acres of ground," Grabenhorst said. "That's hard to find here. Area C (in Keizer Station) is probably too expensive for what they need to do."

Grabenhorst noted WinCo has Warehousers, scaled down stores of about half the size.

Bob Shackelford noted chains looking to come in also look at why previous stores closed, which led to a response from Grabenhorst.

"The reason Roth's left is when Walmart was taking a look at coming here (to Area

C), Orville Roth took a long look at how that would affect his business. It didn't look good, so he left. They didn't come, but it was too late by then."

Former mayor Andy Orcutt, whose family used to have a grocery store in town, pointed to things from a store's view.

"I hear people want a WinCo and don't want to go to Salem," Orcutt said. "WinCo is looking at it, saying why build when they're coming to our store in Salem already?"

Bill White noted he and co-workers talked with company leaders while at WinCo.

"We asked at meetings why we didn't open a store in Keizer," White said. "They said they needed 60,000 in population. Then they said they didn't want a new store to draw customers from the Lancaster store. We said if Walmart opens (in Area C), they will be taking your customers."

Orcutt noted he was surprised Albertsons stayed open as long as it did and was asked what it would take for a chain to open a store in Keizer.

"I think it's going to be individual businesses and chains looking at their studies," Orcutt said. "It's not going to happen unless dollars appear on a sheet. The grocery industry is tough; margins are very low. You do loss leaders to bring people in. When everyone is driving down the street for a loss leader, no one is making money."



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