

Mom spreads message of safety behind wheel

By **CRAIG MURPHY**
Of the Keizertimes

Theresa Potts knows what it is like to have a teenage son get into a serious accident.

As such, she has a message for young drivers.

"Slow down," Theresa said. "Life is too short. You'll get there when you get there. And know your road conditions. When it rains, slow down. There will be oils on the road, especially if it is raining a lot."

On Feb. 19, Theresa's son Keven, who had turned 17 the day before, was driving to golf practice at Willow Lake Golf Center on Windsor Island Road with West Salem High School teammate Connor Campbell.

Keven's 1992 Toyota Camry left the road and slammed into a tree. Keven suffered a couple of broken toes on his left foot, a chipped bone in his right arm and a slight concussion. Connor's injuries were more serious, requiring a longer hospital stay. He was cleared to go back to school just before spring break.

"There was a lot of water on the road," Theresa said. "Keven said it was raining at the time, just really nasty out. He hydroplaned. Keven said he reached for the emergency brake because he was sliding towards the tree on Connor's side and was trying to make it hit more on his side. The car hit the tree and then slid around the tree."

Theresa said Keven, who did not want to talk to the *Keizertimes* about the accident, has gotten stern talking-tos from his girlfriend's mom, Campbell's mom, Sgt. David LeDay with the Keizer Police Department and others.

"He has gotten some flack at school," Theresa said. "He tells people he didn't do it on purpose. Your self-esteem and confidence take a hit. He's still trying to get a lot of trust back from people. Some are questioning if we should let him drive around. He's had to explain himself quite a bit."

LeDay talked of inexperience. "Most young drivers don't

focus on an escape route," LeDay said. "You have to look for your escape route, not at the hazard. Most drivers find that out later in their driving careers. We also had a heavy downpour that day, with standing water on the roadway. Most young drivers don't adjust for those conditions and think it is still okay to go 45 (mph) in those conditions. You have to slow down for that environment and adjust for the conditions."

Theresa was fine with LeDay's sternness.

"Sgt. LeDay was blunt, which I appreciated," she said. "There was some inexperience involved. All kids need to think that sometimes conditions don't

mean you drive the speed limit, especially on country roads. Yes, the tree is too close to the road there, but it is a country road."

Theresa said two other classmates were following.

"One of his friends called me and said Keven was okay but in an accident," Theresa said. "My heart jumped up. They were cutting Keven out of the car. I beat the ambulance to Salem Hospital. It was gnarly accident. Connor got out first, but they told him to sit back down."

Theresa said her son wasn't going above the speed limit or being distracted by a cell phone.

"He said it was an accident," Theresa said. "He wasn't speeding, they weren't playing

around." Theresa said driver's education classes like the one she took in high school would help today's young drivers.

"Kids think they are invincible," she said. "You need to concentrate on what you're doing. Don't do too many things. Even if kids do the bookwork for driver's ed, they need more input and lessons taught about how to drive and what to look for."

Theresa said her son is struggling to recover mentally from the crash.

"Keven is still trying to get past the accident," she said. "He doesn't really want to drive right now."

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catching." In an e-mail sent to Brown late on March 17, Burkhardt estimated he could hang 12 large pieces, with his largest being 48 inches by 32 inches.

KPAC members had questions about how both artists

could be accommodated. "They will share space?" Lore Christopher asked.

Brown said details hadn't quite been figured out yet.

"I have some angst about how they would work together," Brown said. "The problem is the north gallery (along Chemawa Road) gets much less traffic."

KPAC chair Beth Melendy jokingly offered a solution.

"They'd have to draw straws," she joked.

Brown said the two artists have about 15 pieces each, mostly large pieces.

"I make a motion we accept both of these artists and let Nate work it out with them," Christopher said. "Let one have one gallery, the other can take the other."

The motion was approved. In other recent KPAC busi-

ness:

• Rick Day has talked about selling prints of the mural, both limited edition pieces as well as posters, at the last few meetings. He figures those buying a portrait spot for \$200 (as detailed in last week's *Keizertimes*) might want to buy a print as well.

"Say a local family is honored," Day said. "They could have one print at home and

one at their business. Maybe we could create five or six extras. There is the potential to have one original, with 16 copies or editions."

Melendy liked the idea of having a lower cost offering as well.

"I still like the cheap option, like a photograph," she said.

Day nodded in agreement. "It could be a long horizontal piece, like the mural

wall itself," he said. As envisioned by Day, the 16 editions could be \$200 each while 40 posters could go for \$20 each.

• Christopher wants to up the amount KPAC asks the budget committee for during the upcoming budget season.

"We've asked for \$1,000 the last two years," she said. "I'm proposing we put in a request for \$3,000."

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