

Keizertimes

SECTION A

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Top of the class

MHS Valedictorians reach new heights

By DEREK WILEY
Of the Keizertimes

McNary Class of 2016 valedictorians—Katherine Gray, Morgan Hoag, Isaiah Holt, Abigail Johnson, Kelli Miller, Nelson Mueller and Lacey Posterick—haven't just made all A's all four years of high school. They've also made music, played sports, written and acted in plays, constructed tools out of wood and been leaders in their churches.

"I have a planner that stays pretty full," said Johnson, who along with her many commitments to music—wind ensemble, symphony, pit orchestra, marching band, drum major and section leader in the basketball band, all-city, all state and all-northwest bands, Oregon Ambassadors of Music, is also president of the science club, captain of science bowl and a member of the National Honor Society.

She also goes to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Keizer every morning before school for seminary training.

"I try to get a good amount of sleep, at least five hours a night," Johnson said with a grin. "Band really is what keeps me structured. I think if I didn't have that, then I would probably have procrastinated more on my school work."

Johnson also credits her teachers at MHS, particularly Band Director Jennifer Bell.

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McNary High School's Class of 2016 valedictorians, clockwise from bottom left: Abigail Johnson, Morgan Hoag, Katherine Gray, Nelson Mueller, Isaiah Holt, Lacey Posterick and Kelli Miller.

KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley



Traffic tickets strain city court
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MHS welcomes new maestro
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Think Keizer crime is on the rise?



By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

Two homicides, one parking lot shooting with injuries and a fourth incident in which a gun was fired at a home, all of it occurred in Keizer in a span of four months.

It has some thinking the city might not be as safe as it once was, but the reality is that crime in Keizer is on the decline overall.

"Making a comparison between 2015 and 2014, we were actually down in persons crimes and up only two percent in property crimes," said Cara Steele, Keizer Police Department (KPD) crime analyst. "For property crimes, that's a very minimal amount. It's not an increase I would ever be concerned about."

Steele's job involves tracking police call volumes, types of calls for assistance and looking at trends locally, regionally and even statewide.

"I watch the swings, but I'm not seeing an increase," Steele said.

While recent events have

made for big headlines, they are also skewing perceptions of how dangerous Keizer actually is, particularly if responses and alarm bells being sounded on social media are any indication.

"It's a difficult issue to address," said Jeff Kuhns, KPD deputy chief. "We try to be transparent about what's happening and we've started seeing those same claims the more we use Facebook and Twitter."

There is a danger in looking only at numbers, said Steele and Keizer Police Chief John Teague.

"When you look at only the numbers, the perceptions tend to go to the extremes," Teague said.

The data sample is so small that recent violent crimes are considered anomalies rather than the norm, Steele added.

For the most part, said Teague, KPD officers spend their time looking into non-criminal activities.

In all of 2015, KPD officers and detectives investigated 964 Part 1 crimes — a

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Teague

'We can't arrest our way out of homelessness'

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

As the members of the Mid-Willamette Homeless Initiative (MWHI) have been making the rounds in the region collecting feedback from residents on how to tackle homelessness in Marion and Polk counties, they are encountering a familiar refrain.

"We attended a neighborhood meeting this past week and one of the questions that came up was about quality of life and livability concerns around homeless populations," said Marion County Sheriff



Myers

we've found from our experiences is we can't arrest our way out of homelessness."

The statement served as preface to a presentation, provided by members of the Marion County District Attorney's Office and Crisis Outreach Response Team

(CORT), about some of the ways both groups are trying to innovate when tackling crimes often associated with homelessness. It was the centerpiece of the MWHI meeting at Keizer Civic Center Monday, June 6.

"We are looking for better ways to tackle these issues," said Deputy District Attorney Paige Clarkson, who is also the team leader for drug offenses sent to the Marion County DA's office.

When officers make contact with a homeless person

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23 years for man who led 11-year-old to Mexico

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

A former Keizer resident pleaded on his knees for forgiveness in front of a Marion County Circuit Court judge before being sentenced to nearly 23 years in prison on three counts of rape.

The charges stemmed from a 2007 incident involving Raul Xalamihua-Espindola's taking of a then 11-year-old Keizer girl and then fleeing across the country before heading to Mexico.

Judge David Leith imposed the sentence Monday, June 6. Xalamihua-Espindola, 29, pleaded guilty to the charges in May.

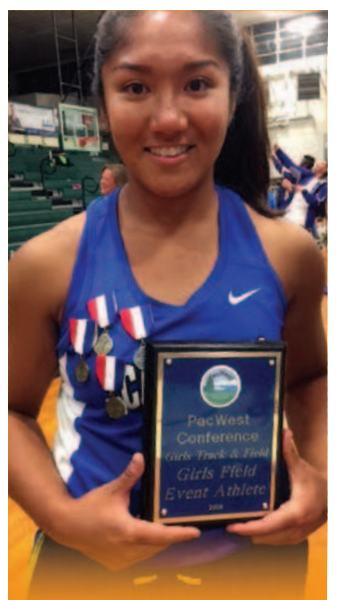
During sentencing, Xalamihua-Espindola's claims that relationships between older men and young girls in

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Raul Xalamihua-Espindola on his knees in front of Judge David Leith as he pleads for forgiveness.

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Keizer teen dominating sports world
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Celt alum to deliver graduation keynote
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