

KeizerCommunity

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Maestro, if you please

High school orchestra gets new director

By DEREK WILEY
Of the Keizertimes

When asked what he liked about working with students, Sean Williams said the answer he gave during his first job interview is still true—"I love that light bulb moment, when they're working and working at something and all of a sudden, they get it and you see them take that leap forward. That's very rewarding as a teacher."

As orchestra director, Sean Williams saw the light come on for 15 years at Stephens Middle School in Salem but now he's moving on to take the same position at McNary High School.

"I've long been interested in working at the high school level," Williams said. "I've been very thankful to have the middle school experience to build my skills and preparation. It's an opportunity for me to broaden my skill set and try something new, work at the high school level with a different level of student, a different age of student. I'm looking forward to the challenge."

Williams' family bought a house in Keizer two years ago and even with the opportunity to work with older musicians, leaving Stephens wasn't easy.

"It takes a long time to get to know all the people in an area, to start making those connections and being established and walking away from that was very difficult," he said. "There's very supportive families, wonderful students over there, great administration."

Williams believes McNary is poised to have consistent excellence in all of its music programs, particularly in



Submitted
Sean Williams conducts the Stephens Middle School orchestra during a concert. Williams, a Keizer resident, is taking the reins of the McNary High School orchestra program.

the strings and full orchestra thanks to the training the current students had when they were in elementary and middle school with people like former Whiteaker Orchestra Director Bonnie Gallagher and current Claggett Creek Orchestra Director Bruce Purdy.

"They are really fantastic teachers who prepared those students well," he said.

Teaching high schoolers isn't foreign to Williams. This year, he was part of the team that started the first symphony orchestra at McKay.

Williams will lead two string orchestras at McNary as well as co-direct the symphony with Jennifer Bell. He'll also teach fifth graders before school at Whiteaker.

Williams said his first order of business at McNary is to recruit students. The orchestra has had four directors in the last five years.

"Anytime you've got turnover and transitions, students look at maybe this isn't something I should be doing," Williams said. "I'm trying to get some of them back into the fold."

With more students, Williams wants to expand the number of string orchestras from two to three.

"I really think in terms of the needs of the students, there really needs to be three so that we've got more of a sequential program," he said. "There's a need to have more of a progres-

sion with the orchestras and to have a place for those students who enjoy making music, who want to develop their skills but maybe they're not invested in a competitive sense. There needs to be a place for them to continue having that outstanding musical experience."

Williams focuses on fundamentals in his teaching.

"It's very easy to get caught up in learning new repertoire, new techniques, new music at higher more challenging levels but you constantly have to cycle back to those fundamental skills because without those in place, it's a house of cards," he said. "It's not as stable and reliable."

While viola is Williams' primary instrument, he started with piano in elementary school and then violin. Williams noted he's "reasonably competent" in cello and string bass and knows enough of the brass and woodwind instruments to get himself in trouble.

Through private lessons in both viola and violin as well as his involvement with the Salem Youth Symphony, Williams has already worked with current McNary students and he knows of at least two eighth graders at Stephens who are following him to the high school in Keizer. Although, they claim he is following them.

"It's a great community, very supportive administration, it's going to be a fantastic ride," Williams said.

Honored alums



Members of the McNary High School Class of 2016 returned to their old stomping grounds at Keizer Elementary School Friday, June 3. The soon-to-be grads paraded through the hallways as current students cheered them on.

Above: McNary graduates collect high-fives from Kennedy Colts. Right: Chris Scofield leads the way. Photos courtesy of Karma Krause



Grassroots government starts here: volunteer for city advisory role

The City of Keizer is soliciting applications for volunteers to serve on the following committees and advisory boards:

- Festival Advisory Board. The committee meets on the fourth Monday of February, April, July, September and November at 6 p.m.
- Keizer Points of Interest Committee (two vacancies). The committee meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.
- Public Art Commission (two vacancies). The commission meets on the fourth Tuesday of every month at 6 p.m.
- Youth Councilor/Youth Liaison/Page - Opportunities are currently available

to area teens for service on city council and various city committees for 2016-17.

Nominations are also being accepted for Volunteer of the Quarter.

Volunteer applications and Volunteer of the Quarter nominations are available at Keizer Civic Center, 930

Chemawa Road NE, Keizer, or you can request an application be mailed to you by calling 503-390-3700. Electronic applications are available at www.keizer.org. For additional information on volunteer positions, contact Debbie Lockhart at 503-856-3418.

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Saturday Vigil Liturgy: 5:30 p.m.
Sundays: 8:15 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
La Misa en Español: 12:30 p.m.

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10:30 a.m. Worship with Communion
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