

KeizerCommunity

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Ochoa taught kids from all over the world

Fred Ochoa tried three other careers before one stuck.

And now after 28 years as a teacher, including 21 in the Salem-Keizer School District, the last five at Cummings Elementary, he is retiring.

"I've had enough," Ochoa said. "Teaching is real tough."

After college, Ochoa was first a park ranger in Texas, where he grew up.

"It really wasn't Walt Disney," Ochoa said. "I was cleaning restrooms and putting up with patrons and all that."

He was then a weapons systems operator and officer in the Air Force for six years before becoming a drug store manager at Walgreens, where one of the pharmacists' wife was a teacher.

"That's how I first got the inkling," said Ochoa, who liked the idea of having summers off. "It was a real selfish reason but it turned out 28 years later, it was much more than that, and really we needed the time off, I found that out."

Ochoa went to night school for a year and a half to earn his teaching certificate. After seven years in Texas, he moved to Oregon in 1995 to take a position at Myers Elementary in West Salem.

"We sold everything we had and burned everything we couldn't sell and drove cross country," said Ochoa, who helped start the bilingual program at Myers.

After 16 years, budget cuts transferred him to Cummings.

"It punched me in the gut but I needed a change," Ochoa said.

"It's a different community,

a different scene, a different staff, different everything. I got pretty used to it after a couple months."

Ochoa taught fifth grade English as a second language students.

"I was brought up in a Spanish-English home so that helped me a lot, really break down barriers so the kids almost immediately take to me," he said. "I just spoke their language. Their culture was my culture. It was my language. Once you wedge that in there, it's easy to get the kids to listen and learn."

While English and Spanish are the most common languages in the Salem-Keizer School District, students speak 83 different languages. Ochoa said he even had a student from Yemen last semester.

"Somebody's got to deal with them," he said. "And even if you don't know the language, at least you're taught some techniques to kind of slowly bring them in. With the refugee crisis around the word, they're showing up."

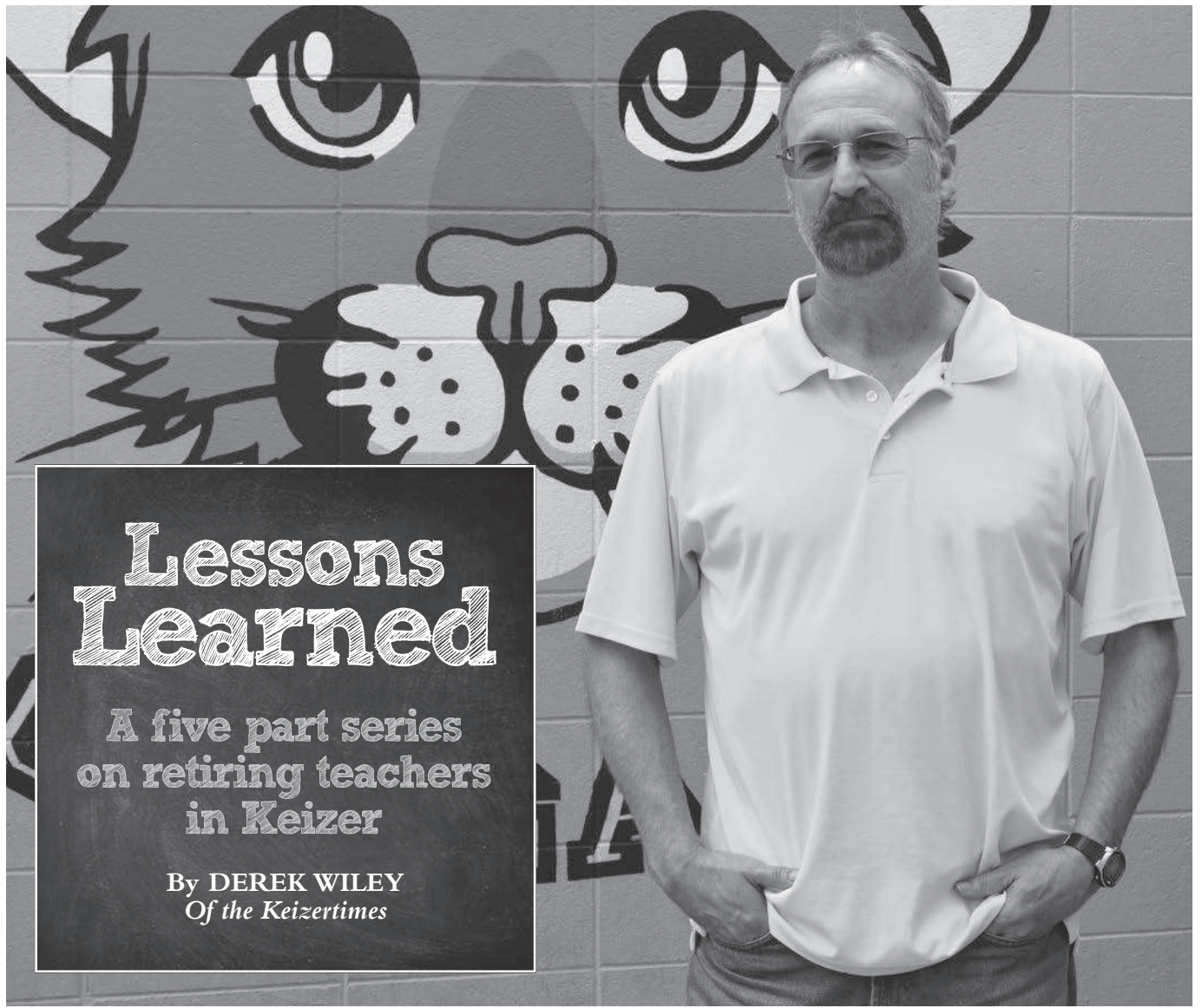
"They tend to be some of the best learners, too, because they have a purpose in life and so do the parents," Ochoa said. "You get some of the best backup from those families."

Ochoa has also taught kids who come from poverty and dysfunctional families. Of his 28 students, he guessed maybe 10 have two parents.

Ochoa said the positive feedback is what has kept him going all of these years.

He plans to wait a year before making his next move.

"We're going to sit tight for one year and let the dust settle and I'm just going to enjoy



Fred Ochoa is retiring after 21 years in the Salem-Keizer School District, including the last five at Cummings Elementary. He taught fifth grade English as a second language.

getting up at 9 [a.m.] and having coffee and saying 'what do you want to do today?'

We're looking at Nevada because being from south Texas, it took me about 10

years to get used to the gray out here."

Ochoa plans to substitute

teach two days a week to stay in touch with the staff at Cummings.

KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley

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Museum hosts kids camp

Deepwood Museum & Gardens is hosting its second year of Kids EDventures in July and August.

Each day of the week is a different theme, and each week will offer a new set of topics focusing on various areas of history, art, culture, and science. Space is limited, pre-registration required. Register online at deepwoodmuseum.org.

All programs are held between 10 and 11:30 a.m. at Deepwood Estate, 1116 Mission Street S.E. in Salem. Cost is \$8 for members and \$10 for non-members per activity.

Art and culture days are slated for July 18 and Aug. 8 and 29. Children will explore other countries through hands-on activities, food, and

music in the historic home and solarium

Tuesdays (July 19, Aug. 9 and 30) are hands-on history days. Children learn about history through pictures, music and hands-on crafts and activities.

Nature EDventures are Wednesdays (July 20, Aug. 10 and 31) and strive to ignite curiosity through fun activities.

Marion County Fair July 7-10

The Marion County Fair returns to Salem this weekend. The five-day extravaganza at the state fairgrounds began on Thursday, July 7, and continues through Sunday, July 10.

Among livestock shows, competitions ranging from cameraphone photography to adult coloring, and a host of regional music acts, offerings this year include Walk on the

Wild Side, allowing visitors to get up close and personal with some of the planet's big cats, camel rides and the Rough Stock Rodeo, featuring some of the best bull riding, barrel racing, bareback and saddle bronc riding in the Northwest.

Reckless Kelly is the headline act Saturday, July 8. High Valley is the main act Saturday,

July 9. For the full line-up and schedule, visit www.co.marion.or.us/CS/Fair.

Tickets are \$5 for youth and seniors and \$9 for adults. Parking is free.

On Friday, July 8, visitors who wear their Awesome 3000 T-shirts will get in free. On Sunday, anyone younger than 12 gets in free.

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SAINT EDWARD Catholic Church
393-5323
5303 River Rd. N., Keizer
Father Gary L. Zerr, Pastor
Saturday Vigil Liturgy: 5:30 p.m.
Sundays: 8:15 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
La Misa en Español: 12:30 p.m.

John Knox Presbyterian Church
452 Cummings Lane North • 393-0404
Rev. Dr. John Neal, Pastor
Worship - 10:30 a.m.
Education Hour - 9:15 a.m.
Nursery Care Available
www.keizerjkpres.org

Faith Lutheran Church
4505 River Rd N • 393-4507
Sunday Schedule:
9:00 a.m. Children's Church
9:15 a.m. Adult Bible Study
9:30 a.m. Children's Activities
10:30 a.m. Worship with Communion
Pastor Virginia Eggert

dayspring fellowship
Celebration Services
Saturday Evening 6:00 pm
Sunday Morning 9:00 am and 10:45 am
Children's Programs, Student and Adult Ministries
1755 Lockhaven Dr. NE Keizer
503-390-3900
www.dayspringfellowship.com

Keizer Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
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