

## STRANGERS: Lockers, restrooms would help

(Continued from Page A1) of storage spaces and use one as a workshop and the other as a gallery while I was living in my van," he said.

When his van was rear-ended by "a big diesel truck" things started to spiral rapidly, and he's been living on the streets since.

"It's just a profound difference in perspective to be the guy sleeping next to the guy you've never met because you don't want to freeze to death," Wiz said. "It changes the way you think. I've gone through dumpsters looking for things for people to eat."

Day-to-day living, he said, revolves around three questions: how do you stay warm and dry; what do you eat; and where do you go to the bathroom?

"And where do you put your stuff so it's there when you come back if you do go to the bathroom?" he said.

He's met some on the streets who he's felt made their way by preying on other homeless people, but he seen others tap deep veins of kindness.

"The people who have the least share the most. Someone will give you their last scrap of food, or part of it," he said.

Prior to taking up the spot under the awning, some members of the group — who Wiz calls brothers — had been living around the old Albertson's just north on River Road North.

When it was announced that the building had been sold to new owners, word made its way down the ranks that the camp would have to find another spot.

Wiz understands it's necessary to a degree, and bore no umbrage to police officers who end up as the messengers.

"When we were over there, the police would come by and tell us to flag them down if we needed anything," Wiz said.

Local and regional leaders assembled a homelessness task force earlier this year with plans to make recommendations for coping with Marion County's burgeoning homeless population. Talks have spanned topics too numerous to list, but many have been targeted around specific subgroups: youth, veterans, women, domestic violence victims and many, many more.

When asked what the area's homeless residents need most, Wiz gets visibly distraught, but settles on the necessities.

"There's too many, but it's the basics. We could use lockers to store our stuff for a few hours or a couple of days for a few dollars. There should be more public restrooms. You don't have to be homeless to need a place to pee," he said.

Wiz remained under the awning until mid-evening. Tuesday morning, he, and his brothers, were gone.

"It's just a profound difference in perspective"

— Wiz

# Homeless camps in Keizer taking up more KPD time

By ERIC A. HOWALD  
Of the Keizertimes

Homelessness is becoming more visible in Keizer.

In many ways, it reached a flashpoint when a group of about a dozen of the area's homeless individuals set down stakes under an awning at the south end of the old Roth's building last weekend. Members of the group were asked to move on late Monday morning, but their appearance along Keizer's main drag made them more visible than other groups had been in recent years.

Since rain continued throughout the day Monday, the officers involved told the Roth's group they had until Tuesday morning to pull up camp.

That camp was one symptom of larger issues affecting the Keizer area, said Jeff Kuhns, deputy chief of the Keizer Police Department.

"The frequency and number of homeless folks in Keizer has increased remarkably in the past few months even though we have been trying to encourage them to 'move on,'" Kuhns said.

Kuhns said it only became more noticeable to more Keizer residents with the appearance of the Roth's encampment.

A similar camp was set up in the bottle return area of the old Albertson's building and they are common occurrences along the Willamette River at the southwest end of town.

"Just recently, I worked with the manager of Safeway to assist him in having several individuals move on who were living in their vehicles in the Safeway parking lot," Kuhns said.

Eventually, the manager had to contact a local towing company and post signs throughout the parking lot threatening towing.

About the same time as the Roth's camp was up and running, KPD officers were also responding to complaints of a group trespassing behind the Keizer Heritage Center gazebo and in the parking lot of the building.

"We responded to and asked these individuals to move on. They did, but only to the gazebo that is in city owned property at Chalmers Jones Park adjacent to City Hall," Kuhns said. "Public prop-

erty (like the Chalmers Jones gazebo) is a whole different ballgame."

Kuhns said the most difficult situations are those involving private property — like the Roth's building, the Albertson's building and even vacated or foreclosed homes where some members of the local homeless population have forced their way in.

"Officers try to offer the individual resources and options that may assist them in finding a resolution to the problem or current circumstance they find themselves in. This may include directions to the Union Gospel Mission or Salvation Army in Salem or Simonka Place for women and children. Additionally, we point them towards the Keizer Community Food Bank at the Faith Lutheran Church," Kuhns said.

The resounding message at recent meetings of a regional task force on homelessness is that there simply aren't enough services to accommodate climbing numbers, but the task force is expected to come up with recommendations for alleviating the situation after its final meeting February 2017.

## ECLIPSE: Consultant report suggests planning years in advance

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event will need to be Americans with Disabilities Act compliant, there is limited space to accommodate the parking space campers would require.

"Are cars going to park by the tents? If not, we have to shuttle them in. These are the logistics that nobody knows yet, and any (vehicle) over 5,000 pounds will damage the pathway to access parts of the camping site," Gottfried said.

Gottfried and Barker determined there would be fewer than 50 spots available for the RVs and there would be two different dry camping sites. The cost would be \$75 a night for dry camping and \$135 a night for RVs with a two-night minimum. The proceeds from

camping and portions of the other likely activities, like vendor food sales, would be donated to Keizer's parks. However, the expenses related to the event are likely to be substantial, portable toilets will need to be rented and round-the-clock security will add to the total.

Gottfried was dismayed to learn that a retail vendor space was not a likelihood, and wanted to see events at the amphitheater scaled back.

She also referenced a free eclipse planning guide provided by an Australia-based eclipse consultant, Dr. Kate Russo.

Russo's guide suggests that planning begin years in advance of an eclipse and that even six months is likely too late to start. Organizers have a little more than eight months to finalize all details and that includes preparing a large site at the park.

For the eclipse-viewing alone, Russo recommends that an astronomy expert, a science educator, a meteorologist and an eclipse-chaser all be enlisted to help with the planning, and that doesn't include all the other facets involved with organizing a large event.

Conservative estimates sug-

gest that as many as 30,000 to 40,000 will visit the area during the eclipse — that includes visitors from other areas of the country as well as those just to the north and south. Cities like Portland and Eugene will only experience a partial eclipse.

Gottfried stressed that she is not dissuaded from attempting to pull it off, but that she wants whatever happens to reflect positively on the city.

"There is a lot to do and no time to do it in. I want it to be good, I don't want people to come to Keizer and have (a bad experience)," she said.

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