

Keizertimes

SECTION A

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By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

When he was 3 years old, Keaton Weimer had a simple request: he wanted to be a pirate for Halloween.

Keaton's dad, Ryan, doesn't seem to do anything in moderation.

Keaton and two of his siblings were born with spinal muscular atrophy, a condition that will require the use of a wheelchair for the rest of their lives. Ryan didn't see the wheelchair as a problem when Keaton asked to be a pirate, he used it as a canvas.

"A pirate needs a ship," Ryan said. "So we drew out some ideas, took some measurements and, luckily, the ideas and measurements all lined up," Ryan said.

The resulting pirate costume included a wooden ship with black sails that appeared to be floating as Keaton drove his motorized wheelchair around the neighborhood on Halloween night in La Grande, Ore. An idea was born



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as Keaton made the rounds because of what Ryan saw happening.

"There's this awkwardness around disability or difference. People don't want to stare or they end up staring and they don't know whether to come up and say, 'Hi' or not. It's not malicious, but it's society," said Ryan, who now lives in Keizer with his family. "That night, the awkwardness disappeared – the wheelchair disappeared – kids came right up to him. I thought about the many, many other families out there like ours. Any time we experience something that beautiful our response should be: how do we share it?"

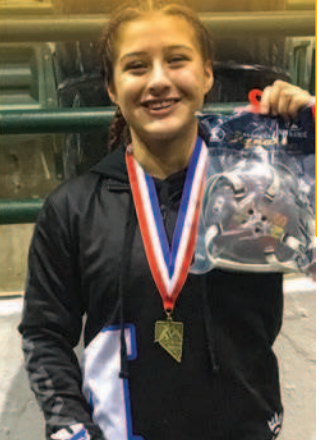
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LEFT: Keaton Wiemer rides Indominus Rex. BELOW: The Wiemer family: Bryce, 6, Lana, Thatcher, 3, Ryan, and Keaton, 12. KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald



Sophomore makes championship wrestling run

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Man dies by own hand after accident

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Field fees on council agenda again Jan. 16

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

The Keizer City Council is expected to take a new look at fees charged for field usage at Keizer Little League Park during its next meeting Tuesday, Jan. 16.

The meeting is taking place one day later than normal because of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.



In December, the council considered a request by Keizer Little League (KLL) to raise field fees by \$10 across the board. KLL manages the park under a contract with the city.

The city council agreed to table the issue just as the exchange between representatives of KLL and McNary Youth Baseball (MYB), formerly KYSA, started to become heated.

The two organizations split in 2006 over disagreements regarding how to balance programming available to all Keizer youth and those seeking a more competitive environment. Since that time, relations between the splintered factions have remained somewhat tense. After KLL managing the fields for more than 30 years, KYSA took over the park man-



agement contract for several years. The situation came to a head again in 2013 and 2014 with KYSA leadership asking for more investment for repairs from the city and then taking some of the property that predated the organization's management of the facility just before KLL was restored as the facility manager.

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One Acts at MHS

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Town hall this weekend

Sen. Jeff Merkley (D) and Rep. Kurt Schrader (D) will host a joint town hall meeting in Keizer Saturday, Jan. 13.

The meeting is slated for 9:30 a.m. in the commons area of Claggett Creek Middle School, 1810 Alder Drive N.E. There is no cost to attend.



Sen. Merkley

Merkley and Schrader will talk about recent legislative developments in the U.S. Congress and take questions from constituents.

"In our 'We the People' democracy, town hall meetings are an essential tool for me to hear from Oregonians and represent their interests back in D.C.," Merkley said.

Since joining the Senate in 2009, Merkley has held a town hall in each of Oregon's 36 counties every year.



Rep. Schrader

Orchard gets axe

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

A 20-acre hazelnut orchard along the west side of Keizer Rapids Parks has seen its last harvest.

Volunteers were expected to begin knocking down the trees with donated equipment as soon as Saturday, Jan. 13.

"It's reached the end of its useful life," said Bill Lawyer, Keizer Public Works director. "The lease on the property ended in November and the yield was so low that it was going to be, at best, a break-even deal for the farmer in the future."

The orchard has had a turbulent few years leading up to its demise. The farmer who leased the property from the city for five years in 2012 asked for release from it in 2015 as plans for The Big Toy came to fruition. He cited the potential health and legal pitfalls of using pesticides next to a children's play area as the primary reason for pulling out of the deal.

That same year, another



farmer, Kevin Schurter approached the city with a proposal to take over the care and harvesting using only glyphosphate (Roundup) on the ground. Schurter's lease ended in November 2017 and he opted not to renew it.

Lawyer said the reduced use of pesticides probably hastened the aging of the trees.

A nearly 90-year-old orchard in Keizer Rapids Park will be taken down starting Saturday, Jan. 13.

Longtime Keizer volunteers Mark Caillier, Jerry Nuttbrock and Randy Miller are leading the effort to remove the trees and make way for a different crop. The ground will also be raked to remove as many of the roots as possible.

KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald

Caillier said estimates on the number of trees has varied, but it's somewhere between 1,800 and 2,000.

"It only takes about 30 seconds to knock one over. Many

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Celtic boys, girls top Titans on court

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