

# Friendships forged success for Keizer's First Citizen

By ERIC A. HOWALD  
*Of the Keizertimes*

One weekend, about 15 years ago, Keizer's newest First Citizen, Joe Egli, wanted to go to Costco and buy a play structure for his kids, Madi and Noah.

However, he didn't have a way to get it back to his house after making the purchase. Fortunately, one of his neighbors, Mike Kurtz, was an acquaintance through the Rotary Club of Keizer and he owned a pick-up truck.

"I went over and asked him if I could borrow it to go buy the set, but Mike offered to drive me and then spent the whole weekend in my backyard helping me assemble it," Egli said. "I didn't think people did that kind of thing."

Fifteen years later, he's still somewhat shocked by the kind gesture, but that experience fuels his desire to be an active part in the community.

"Everything I've given, I've

gotten back tenfold. Every little bit you can give back makes a difference," Egli said.

Egli didn't move to Keizer until 1996, but he was a frequent visitor to the area as a child and worked here during the summers as a painter beginning at age 13. He eventually struck out on his own with a painting business and that's when his civic engagement began in earnest.

Soon after starting his own business, Egli was sold a ticket to the Rotary Raffle by another Rotarian, Kim Girouard, and he began asking how he might get more involved with the group.

"I remember I was sitting next to Jim Hupy at one of the meetings and he was telling me about the old schoolhouse. It had just been moved and the plywood was still on it and nothing else was happening. He thought if he could just get the plywood off of it, people might be more motivated to get involved in

"Everything I've given, I've gotten back tenfold."

— Joe Egli

preserving it," Egli said. Egli did Hupy one better, he said if Hupy could arrange for buying the paint, he would paint it for free.



Joe Egli was honored as Keizer's First Citizen at a banquet in January.

you realize," Egli said with an exasperated chuckle.

Still, Egli was undeterred. He would eventually serve as president of Rotary and began taking on larger roles in civic projects. When another member of Rotary committed the

group to helping create the focal point at the corner of Chemawa Road North and River Road North, Egli quickly became the supervisor for the project.

Through the enlistment of a small army of volunteers and in-kind donations, the focal point rose up from a gravel lot that was once a gas station.

"It was a lot of work, but we put together a \$300,000 project on a budget of about \$20,000," Egli said. "That was my first time working with a lot of the other people associated with volunteering in Keizer."

Newton-McGee Plaza was completed in early 2003 and it's the spot where visitors and new residents discover Keizer motto, "Pride, Spirit and Volunteerism."

"We were looking for a saying to put on the fountain and we were just tossing out ideas and someone said, 'Pride, Spirit and Volunteerism.' We all stopped and said, 'We're done.' Everyone in the room knew that was the right thing to put on there," Egli said.

Christine Diecker, the former executive director of the Keizer Chamber of Commerce,

enlisted Egli to run the Keizer Chamber of Commerce's Economic Development and Government Affairs (EDGA) Committee and that helped him set his sights on a seat on Keizer's City Council.

"I got interested in the council through EDGA. When (former City Councilor) Richard Walsh decided to leave the council, he approached me and asked if I would be interested in running," Egli said.

Egli was and he served one term as a city councilor. Among the major hallmarks of his time on the council were efforts to move the Chamber of Commerce office to Keizer Station, ushering in the move of the Festival of Lights Parade to Keizer from Salem, and determining the city's position in an attempt by Keizer Fire District to annex a portion of north Keizer that was, and still is, served by Marion County Fire District No. 1.

More recent volunteer work includes serving on the board of the McNary Athletic Booster Club as treasurer and a spot on the board of directors for the Salem-Keizer Education Foundation.

His role with SKEF ended up creating an opportunity for him to fly to southern California last year and drive back in a donated bookmobile.

"You always hear about people making trips like that and I figured this was my shot. But, man, that was rough. It was like driving a semi," Egli said.

Egli, who is now agent with Brown Insurance Agency in Woodburn, said he feels the relationships he's developed through volunteering have helped him be successful in his business endeavors.

"But that's always been secondary to the friendships," Egli said. "I feel very blessed to be around such great people all the time. I feel very successful in business because of the relationships."

*(Editors note: In the Jan. 26 edition of the Keizertimes, we mistakenly reported that Egli was an agent with R. Bauer Insurance.)*

**10 Most Wanted**

Soup, Pasta, Tuna, Vegetables, Fruit, Peanut Butter, Tomato, Cereal, Flour

Over 16,000 children a month eat from emergency food boxes in Marion & Polk counties.

**You can help!**

1660 Salem Industrial Dr. NE, Salem, OR 97301 (503) 581-3855  
www.marionpolkfoodshare.org

Marion-Polk FOOD SHARE

## obituaries

### Donald Stuart Vowell

Jan. 17, 1949- Jan. 15, 2018

Don Vowell was born in Clarkston, Wash., to Raymond and Marcia Vowell on Jan. 17, 1949.

As described by Don, he and his siblings, Chuck, Anita, and Elizabeth had an "Ozzie and Harriet" upbringing. After a brief jaunt to Japan to play in a rock and roll band and a bit longer in Seattle to attend classes at UW, he moved to Spokane where he met his future bride, Nancy. They moved to Unalaska, Alaska, where he began his 32 year postal career. Eventually they moved to Port Orchard, Wash., and on to Keizer, Ore., where they settled down and raised their two beloved and adored children, Hannah and

Schuyler. Over all else, he was extremely proud of his family.

Don never outgrew being the class clown. His keen and wacky wit was a source of entertainment to all. His love of music and photography also spilled over into others' lives. His eye for beauty ran deep. He went through life with joy and even when pulmonary fibrosis took hold, he was determined to remain true to himself. He will be missed by many.



D. Vowell

A memorial service will be held at First Christian Church on Marion Street, February 17, at 2 p.m. A reception will follow. In lieu of flowers, a donation to a charity of your choice would be appreciated.

**embrace HEALTH™**  
**Begin Here**

**Extraordinary care close to home**

**Family Medicine Clinics**

- State-Certified, Patient Centered Primary Care Home (PCPCH)
- Lifelong Exceptional Care
- Medical Providers Available in Aumsville, Stayton, Sublimity, and Mill City

**Surgery Center**

- Exceptional Surgical Team
- Large Operating Rooms Equipped with State-of-the-Art Technology
- Same Day Surgical Care Unit

**Family Birth Center**

- Compassionate and Highly-Trained RNs
- TOTS Infant Security
- Birth Options & Labor Tubs
- OHSU NICU Telemedicine Support

**Diagnostic Imaging**

- Philips Mobile Digital Low Dose X-Ray
- State-of-the-Art Philips Ingenia MRI units.
- CT Scanner with O-MAR (Metal Artifact Reduction) Software

**Emergency**

- Open 24 Hours a Day, 7 Days a Week
- You will be Seen & Treated in a Timely Manner
- Competent, Experienced and Caring ER Physicians, Nurses, and Paramedics

**Medical Surgical/ICU**

- Highly-Trained Medical Team Available 24/7
- Extraordinary Care for our Patients & Community
- Well-Coordinated Care & Bedside Comfort

**Why Wait?**

**SANTIAM HOSPITAL**

503.769.2175  
1401 N 10th Ave.  
Stayton, Oregon  
santiamhospital.org