

KeizerCommunity

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McNary sophomore wins talent show

By DEREK WILEY
Of the Keizertimes

Nicholas Weathers was in the fifth grade when he got his first clarinet from Uptown Music.

After winning \$1,000 at the first KeizerFest Teen Talent Showcase, Weathers will be able to purchase more music equipment from the Keizer store that sponsored the event on Sunday, May 20.

Playing *Premiere Rhapsody* by Claude Debussy on the clarinet, Weathers, a sophomore at McNary High School, finished first out of 26 acts from middle and high schools in Salem-Keizer.

"It was really unexpected," Weathers said. "I just went to state playing that piece and I did not do very well. I wasn't even in the top five. I was really surprised. I thought one of the amazing singers that performed today would have gotten it and definitely not me."

Weathers was the only performer not to sing, which he compared to Mozart finding his way into a hip hop competition.

"I thought I was really out of place," Weathers said. "It was very different for me."

Weathers wasn't exactly sure what he would spend his winnings on. But he does have many options.

"My dad is a pilot so I'd like to get my private pilot's license soon," Weathers said. "I love music. I always love getting instruments. Maybe driver's ed. That'd probably be logical."

Hannah Wood, of West Salem, and Kourtney Lynn Branchfield, of North Salem, who both stood out by performing original songs, finished second and third, win-



ning \$700 and \$400.

"It was a real confidence booster," Weathers said. "It

meant a lot. I've been going through some hard times lately, lots of life things, school.

I've been so busy I don't feel like I've been able to put time in for myself. I've been practicing a lot, AP stuff. It's nice."

KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley
A: Teen Talent Showcase winners Hannah Wood (second), Kourtney Lynn Branchfield (third) and Nicholas Weathers (first) with Paul Elliott of Uptown Music. B: Whiteaker Middle School students Riley Mahoney, Blake Felbob and Roman Justise. C: Nicholas Weathers plays the clarinet. D: Kennadi Thomas and Jacob Fritts. E: Lilly Purkey

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