

Keizertimes

SECTION A

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File

Fight for literacy

Co-taught classes essential to solution

By **MATT RAWLINGS**
Of the Keizertimes

Coming into the school year, administration at McNary High School knew that they were getting a high volume of incoming ninth graders that weren't reading at grade level — roughly 45 percent of the freshman class.

During the first semester, McNary offered literacy tutorials for students that needed remedial assistance to try and help them get back on track.

However, at the start of second semester, the Salem-Keizer School District made the decision to eliminate literacy tutorials, or any English electives that were used as a substitute for students that were unprepared for ninth-grade English classes.

The decision put the burden on McNary English teachers to try and figure out how to help struggling kids catch-up, even though they were now put in a class that was above their skill level.

"There have always been low readers and there has always been high achievers," McNary English teacher Melinda Bouley said. "But this year, it's been harder to differentiate the extremes that are there because without the literacy tutorials, you have to figure out how to support the kid that is at a third-grade reading level when I

have kids that are reading at a senior level in the same class reading the same text."

But Bouley is in her 12th year teaching freshman English at McNary, and she is no stranger to rolling with the punches.

Bouley is teaching four English-nine classes this semester and two of them are co-taught by Nicole De Blasi, who, along with being a co-teacher, works in the special education department at McNary.

English classes are co-taught when there are a high number of students on

"This year, it's been harder to differentiate the extremes."

— Melinda Bouley,
McNary english teacher

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Schools, church strike \$2.26 million deal

By **ERIC A. HOWALD**
Of the Keizertimes

A weeks-long standoff over six acres behind St. Edward Catholic Church came to an abrupt end on Valentine's Day.

Salem-Keizer Public Schools and the church leadership struck a \$2.26 million deal for that land that will allow the district to proceed with plans to expand capacity at McNary High School.

"We recognize that like schools, churches are the hubs of the communities they serve, and we look forward to being good neighbors and partners. We appreciate their professionalism through this process," said Salem-Keizer Superintendent Christy Perry in a statement.

The district was slated to take possession of the property on Tuesday, Feb. 19, which will allow the district to proceed with filing the permits it needs to begin construction this summer.

The six acres behind the church are expected to become softball fields and a soccer pitch with limited parking and a driveway for special education buses to reach the campus.

The current softball fields will be used for additional parking, tennis courts and a more streamlined pick-up and drop-off traffic pattern.

McNary's scheduled expansion includes additions to the north and south sides of the existing building that will eliminate the need for portable classrooms and result in 14 new general classrooms, a new science lab and two career-technical education spaces.

The church and school district had been trading legal filings for the better part of two months over the district's usage of eminent domain.

River Rd redux hones in on cyclists, pedestrians

By **ERIC A. HOWALD**
Of the Keizertimes

About three dozen Keizer residents, city officials and committee volunteers turned out to give feedback on proposals for revitalizing Keizer's commercial corridors during an open house Tuesday, Feb. 12.

Among the various ideas on the table is a way to transform River Road to accommodate and promote multimodal transportation such as biking and walking. Consultants from Otak prepared three options and asked attendees to place stickers indicating their level of support next to the three proposals.

At a meeting of the Keizer Traffic Safety Committee two days later, Community Development Director Nate Brown said it was one of the more divisive issues, but problems will persist without change.

"There are 32,000 trips a day on River Road, and when we expanded it some of the frontage on the east side was chopped off leaving businesses with substandard parking," Brown said.

The options Otak arrived at were:

1 – Removing the center turn lane and installing buffered bike lanes on both sides of River Road. While the bike lanes would be buffered, some cyclists might be uncomfortable with the close proximity to vehicle traffic.

Visitors to an open house on revitalizing River Road assess some of the proposals coming out of the study.

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2 – Installing a two-way bike and walking path on the east side of River Road. In this instance, vehicle travel lanes would be decreased from 12 feet to 10 feet and result in a more comfortable travel bike for riders of all levels.

3 – Retaining all current lanes of travel, but reducing lane sizes to 10.5 feet across the board while installing four-foot bike lanes on each side of the road. Given the small bike lane size, Brown

said only the most courageous riders would likely use the bike lanes.

During the open house, participants mostly hated the idea of eliminating the center lane, they were lukewarm on Option 3 and a two-way bike and pedestrian lane received the most support.

Brown said a fourth option is establishing parallel bike paths on exterior streets, but that options on the east and west sides are not as close to River Road as most riders would prefer.

There might be opportunities to implement elements of all three options depending on the available space at various points along

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WEST SALEM SHOOTING RANGE:

A possible solution?

A measure proposed by Oregon Senate President Peter Courtney would open the possibility of suing city and county jurisdictions when bullets stray from private property and injure others.

The bill, Senate Bill 781 (SB781), may not have an immediate impact on the dispute between residents of west Keizer and a shooting range

located in Polk County across the river, but the threat of financial liability might force the hand of Polk County commissioners who have been reluctant to take action.

Keizer residents have attended Polk County Commissioners' meetings several times during the past year to ask for an end to the shooting taking place across the river and, were at one point,

asked "how big a bubble" they wanted.

SB781 would also make it explicit in Oregon Revised Statute that a county or city could adopt ordinances to "regulate, restrict or prohibit the discharge of firearms within their boundaries," but the bill includes numerous exceptions in the vein of simply having permission to discharge a firearm on private property as a justification for doing so.

While the bill is a step



Peter Courtney



HW: Health & Wellness

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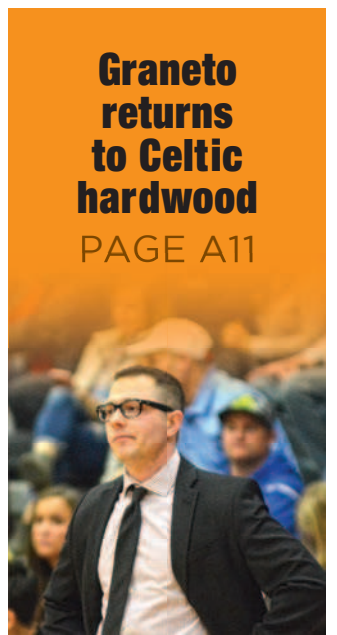
Keizer's Kid Governor finalist

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Girls bowling head to state tourney

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Graneto returns to Celtic hardwood

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