

Opinion

Ray Boucher 1928-2019

He filled a room with his personality and his laugh. Ray Boucher, the patriarch of a proud Keizer family, passed away Oct. 12.

The bigger-than-life Boucher, who opened a humble jewelry store with his wife, Louise, on River Road in 1953, was a leader when Keizer was just still trying to figure out its identity.

Boucher Jewelers met the jewelry needs of Keizer when the city's main thoroughfare was a two-lane gravel road. Ray Boucher's business acumen built the store into the preferred jeweler in the area, a tradition carried on by the second and third generations of the family.

Boucher was much more than a man who owned a store. He, along with other business leaders

of 1960s-era Keizer, had a vision for what the unincorporated community of Keizer could become. Ray was instrumental in turning the little Commercial Club into the Keizer Merchants Association (the forerunner to today's Keizer Chamber of Commerce).

Ray Boucher was as civic-minded as they come. He loved Keizer and was a real cheerleader for the small businesses that lined River Road. He and the other business leaders devised events to attract customers into all the stores.

People liked Ray Boucher. He was unassuming but he was wise in the ways of community leadership, striving to achieve what was best for Keizer. He used his gentle persuasion to perfection—never a

shouter, never a showboat.

A lover of race horsing, Ray owned a stable of the majestic animals, fostering several winners. That's why the logo of Boucher Jewelers is a horse head.

Enjoying his retirement years, Ray visited the store often, a store run by his sons Steve and Jeff, and now some of his grandchildren are involved as well. All of whom maintain the Boucher creed: quality products and quality service, always.

Time marches on; the leaders of early pre-city Keizer have passed and we will not see their kind again. Every generation defines its own identity and purpose. Civic and business leaders would do well to emulate the example Ray Boucher set more than 60 years ago.

— LAZ

our
opinion

Should Keizer expand north?

Via social media, we asked our readers: Regarding Keizer's future, are you in favor of expanding the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) north of the city for residential development?

These are selected responses:

Expansion of the UGB is very much needed to allow for additional housing options. Well managed growth in identified land not used for prime agriculture is necessary.

— *Christine Jones Dieker*

It would be nice to see more single family homes built that would meet the needs for our shortage in housing. It seems that the new construction I see most is either \$400,000 and more homes, or apartments. It would be nice to see some affordable homes going in.

— *Kimberly Free*

Yes! It would be great to see some new single family neighborhoods in north Keizer. All of the new neighborhoods are out South.

— *Nicole Todd Graneto*

I support expansion of the UGB. The need for housing will continue. We expand or force crowded growth into limited space.

— *Marc Adams*

No; too many people/homes now. The roads are not made for

the drivers that are non-stop racing up and down Wheatland and River Roads. All the people coming from the Wheatland Ferry, racing up the hill or turning from Brooklake/Wheatland full speed and it seems as soon as they come to the stop sign/Dead End of Brooklake, they lift their phones.

— *Arlet Peterson Johnson*

I'd prefer to keep my small town small.

— *Jan Blanco*

Not if it claims more agricultural land.

— *Tamra Burleson*

I love our small community even though it's not so small any more. You go north you take up agricultural land and we need it now more than ever. Why does every piece of vacant land need to have a house on it? Look at Portland and even Salem, and how they have expanded and all the problems they have with it.

— *Lisa Herring*

No! We are not keeping up with current demands. Crowded schools, cars speeding in residential areas!

— *Robert-Lisa Reynolds-Barker*

Only if it comes with a new North Keizer High School.

— *Bree Hughes*

No! Not at all. Why is Keizer

what's
your
view?

Saving the sage grouse

By **JIM PARR**

With dwindling federal support and interest, protecting the Western or Greater Sage Grouse from likely extinction is going to fall to the state, county and local governments.

The estimated remaining population of 200,000 or so birds, which includes several sub-species, is scattered across the basin and range areas of Oregon, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, eastern California and up into the southern plains of Canada. With so few remaining birds, the gene pool is becoming critically restricted.

Thus population stabilization and enhancement measures are urgently needed.

Without committed federal support, how might the citizens of Oregon play a crucial part in protecting this iconic bird from disap-

pearance? Possibly some aspects of recently developed regional plans can still be implemented. These plans emphasize the need for the preservation, creation, and expansion of quality habitat. These large birds need lots of open space and during late summer and fall, as the summer vegetation dries out, access to water.

Unlike most members of the Galliforme family, grouse are not seed or grain eaters. Rather, they exist on succulent plant leaves, buds and flowers, and native grasses. In spring time, the flowering plants attract insects which are important to the diet of newly hatched and growing grouse chicks. During the winter months, the sage grouse feeds largely on the leaves and tips of sage brush, thus their name. Land that provides

the required plant species for food and cover is critical. Without their preferred natural habitat, the birds may move around a bit but mostly they just gradually die out.

What are some possible management strategies? First, make it profitable for ranchers and farmers and tribes to set aside some of their land and waterways as protective habitat. Secondly, help these land owners establish and enhance the presence of plant species that provide the seasonal food and cover that the grouse require.

Other more drastic programs may be needed such as a pause in hunting and the establishment of a captive breeding and propagation program. Captive sage grouse propagation programs are already underway in Alberta, Canada and in Gunnison, Colorado. The Oregon Zoo successfully manages a captive breeding program for the California condor. They learned how to do it. With commitment and effort, we should be able to develop a breeding program for the grouse as well.

Action is needed now. Doing nothing will not save the sage grouse. A combination of protective and enhancement strategies is needed and if we don't get busy right away, the sage grouse could disappear in nearly the blink of the eye. Remember what happened to the native prairie chicken (also a grouse) of eastern Oregon at the hands of the early settlers. Or what happened to the passenger pigeon of eastern North America which once numbered in the millions. Or what almost happened to the American bison.

It's going to take investment, time, volunteers, and interest. Let's try some things now and not wait until it is too late to learn what can work. If Oregon can become a sanctuary for the sage grouse, other wildlife will also benefit and our success stories can be shared with other regions. Hopefully it is not too late.

(Jim Parr lives in Keizer.)

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UGB, continued from Page A1

Caillier said. "But I don't think we can keep Keizer the same way it is today. Residential development, even with the initial [development] fees, does not cover the expenses of fire and police."

If Keizer was able to get a divorce from Salem and expand its UGB, the cost of homes in the expanded areas could be so high that many current Keizer residents couldn't afford them. Development charges to cover new infrastructure could be as much as 10 times the rate in current green field development, but those spaces are diminishing quickly.

"If we go that [infill] route, can we say we'll embrace this financially further on down the road?" asked Commissioner Frank Hostler.

As the meeting unfurled, that idea got the most traction.

"It's something we need to take 10-15 years to save for. With the infill, we redesign the base and fees and

that gets us saving toward divorce," said Commissioner Jeffrey Watson.

While support grew, commissioners worried that they were kicking the can down the road.

"We will get to the point where we are bursting at the seams," said Commissioner Matt Lawyer.

To avoid painting the city into a corner with infill as the only option, Brown said the commission could recommend going the infill route and request city staff establish benchmarks for progress toward the eventual expansion of the UGB. Moving forward on that path gave commissioners a way forward and a stake in the process.

"I would be interested in benchmarks, how they will be measured and how attainable they will be," said Commissioner Jeremy Grenz.

Brown and Witham agreed to come back with benchmark proposals in the coming months.

Contact the reporter at editor@keizertimes.com. (With a tip 'o the hat to Shane Witham who proposed a killer headline.)

FEST, continued from Page A1

program at McNary.

The concert begins at 7 p.m. and will feature performances from Mad Love, My Brothers and I, Mind the Gap, OnenO and Lisa Vazquez. But it's what happens before the concert that makes this event so unique.

Through multiple sessions and interactive workshops, students will spend the afternoon learning and performing their specific styles to more than 50 professional musicians from all over the west coast.

Styles include: any style of band, singer/songwriter, rap/-hip-hop/R&B/electronic, solo artist and a cappella groups.

Thomas believes that the main reason for the growth he saw from many of his students in the last year was because of those workshops kids got to experience at the last festival.

"It was the key component in motivating and inspiring our students. To put them in that environment, they get to see what a next-level musician looks like and they get to work with them and they came away inspired and it made them want to work harder in class. They still talk about how impactful it was for them," Thomas said.

McNary senior Shelby Jamison added: "The feedback we got last year was amazing. We got to talk with musicians one-on-one to see what



Submitted

A capella groups from numerous schools perform at last year's festival.

SHARP, continued from Page A1

After the safety inspection, DePina and a throng of city employees working on specific committees got back to work.

On the city side of things, the inspection resulted in a variety of small improvements, such as signs warning against opening doors too quickly. Others required breaking out tools.

"We had to anchor a lot of shelving throughout the civic center to protect in case of an earthquake. We had a few containers that needed better labeling. I also assisted the park guys with a couple of things," said Dan Collingham, maintenance manager for the Keizer Civic Center.

The city had to install eyewash stations in several pump houses and replace others in the Keizer Police Department (KPD).

Lt. Trevor Wenning oversees safety at KPD and already knew the eyewash stations were a problem.

"We had to use an additive in the old wash stations and it reacted with some of the other things we already knew were in Keizer water. After 30 days or so, you could shine a light down the nozzle and it looked like someone had blown their nose into it," Wenning said.

After clearing the safety hurdles, a health inspector judged the city on a different set of criteria. In both the police and city services, the largest hurdle was getting anyone who uses a respirator certified to do so.

"Whenever you have to wear a full respirator, you have to be certified by a doctor because there are elements in the cartridges that can cause allergic reactions," said Pat

we could improve on and what we could do in the future to make our sound better."

This year's festival will put an even bigger focus on creating more workshops for the students, with the goal of making the environment more about learning.

"It's a more educationally enriching experience for the participants where kids are growing as artists, which will give them more of an opportunity to grow and develop and explore contemporary music genres," Thomas said.

One representative from each musical style will also be chosen to perform at the concert alongside professional musicians, and according to McNary student Samantha Wagner, the concert will have the ability to appeal to many different types of people.

"It's definitely awesome because there is a piece of music for every single person that goes," Wagner said. "Music is very interpretive and you can feel it in so many different ways. The same lyrics can impact one person so much differently than another, so going to the festival feeds into that and it encourages young students to put their hearts out there."

The cost for solo participants is \$15 and \$100 for a capella acts — which covers mentor sessions as well as the evening concert.

Tickets for the general public are \$8 for students and \$10 for adults.

Taylor, public works water division manager.

That was a smaller task for public works as only a few employees need to use respirators as part of their duties, but it meant nearly every Keizer police officer had to complete a questionnaire that was then reviewed by a doctor.

"It's smell-related with the police, it has to do with when we encounter dead bodies," said Wenning.

In the end, the punch-list was so small that OSHA couldn't deny Keizer was a SHARP city.

"I'd say one of the bigger challenges was translating OSHA-speak to our operations. It required knowing when we were required to do something it might affect several different types of employees," said Tammie Harms, Keizer legal assistant. Harms spearheaded updating policy and procedure manuals.

What DePina still doesn't know is if the extra effort will translate into insurance cost savings in addition to bragging rights.

"Because we're the first city to be certified, we don't know how it will affect insurance. But that's going to be interesting," DePina said.

It could also make Keizer city jobs more appealing to those looking for the safest possible environment.

Even if bragging rights are the main pay-off in the short-term, DePina said the effort was a demonstration of city employees being willing to work together to achieve a common goal.

"I don't know if this would have been possible if we hadn't had the assistance of all the employees and the management and everybody being so cooperative, willing to fix things and implement changes," DePina said.