

THIS IS HOW IT BEGINS

McNary Oaks residents take first step toward new OSTA chapter

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

At times, there was an almost giddy atmosphere during an Oregon State Tenants Association (OSTA) informational session at McNary Oaks Mobile Villa Friday, Nov. 8.

It was the sort of dizzying euphoria that arises when doing something subversive, yet totally within one's rights.

For the first time in years, about two dozen residents of the park met to discuss how they might become a more unified voice when talking to the park's on-site property manager and owner, Investment Property Group, LLC. In a few short weeks, some of the organizers already made great strides. In the hours before the meeting, they successfully petitioned for, and management had installed, a dedicated OSTA newsletter box placed

outside the park clubhouse.

Inside the clubhouse, neighbors who have lived in close proximity to each other for months or years introduced themselves for the first time and then Rita Loberger, president of the statewide OSTA, began her pitch for reinstating a OSTA chapter at McNary Oaks.

"We are not a legal entity. I cannot take you to court and represent you," Loberger said. "We provide education and we provide referrals."

Loberger was peppered with questions and comments throughout the hour-long presentation. One attendee even walked out when the discussion wasn't moving in a specific direction quickly enough, but Loberger's advice had as much to do with building community within the park as it did interacting with

management.

"You have to know your neighbors first," before the residents can begin approaching management with demands, Loberger said. That happens through spending time together, she continued, at potlucks, coffee socials, knitting circles or — as once happened in the McNary Oaks clubhouse — a billiards league.

"It sounds like you have [the owner's] attention now, so maybe this is the time to strike while the iron is hot and things are moving. Let them know that you want some of these activities back. You could make this a community that everyone could enjoy," Loberger said.

OSTA can provide information and education, but it requires that 10 residents to become dues-paying members before an official chapter



KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald
A dedicated OSTA newsletter box is one of the first steps being taken to help McNary Oaks Mobile Villa residents organize.

can be established at the park. OSTA dues are \$10 a month and, before the meeting was over, some attendees were al-

ready discussing how they might help neighbors cover the costs.

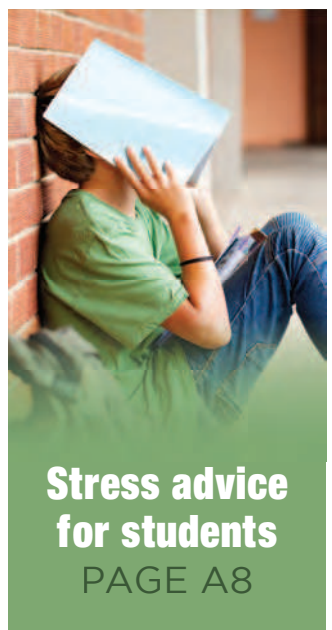
Please see OSTA, Page A5



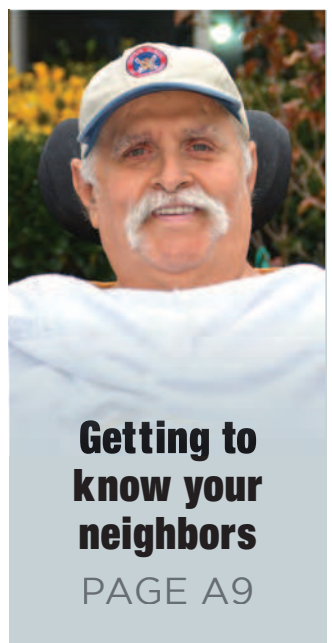
Eighth graders go undefeated
PAGE B1



Veterans pow wow
PAGE A2



Stress advice for students
PAGE A8



Getting to know your neighbors
PAGE A9



Spirit of the season

KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald
Cooler air and leaves on the ground prompted a spontaneous act of creativity on the part of Keizertimes intern Brooklyn Flint.

Keizer third grader, cancer survivor turns spokesmodel

By **MATT RAWLINGS**
Of the Keizertimes

Having courage in the face of medical uncertainty is difficult at any age. Addison Sermon knows that as well as anyone.

Back in 2015, when she was just four years old, Addi was diagnosed with cancer and had to endure six months of chemotherapy, as well as radiation treatment.

Despite being so young, the way Addi faced her illness with great bravery and a positive attitude was very admirable. But what has been arguably just as noteworthy is what she has done since beating cancer.

The third grader from Clear Lake Elementary often donates her allowance to Doernbecher Children's Hospital in Portland and also serves as a spokesmodel for the Make-A-Wish foundation, which is why she was recognized during the student success spotlight portion of the



Addison Sermon

Salem-Keizer School District Board meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 12.

"I just want to encourage and love people who are sick," Addi said.

In April of 2015, Addi wasn't feeling well one night and was rushed to Salem Hospital, with what her parents thought was appendicitis.

But after going through a litany of tests, doctors informed Addi's family that she had a Wilms tumor and needed to be transported to

Please see SURVIVOR, Page A7

Wards, mayoral duties, quorums dominate charter review meeting

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

City Attorney Shannon Johnson told members of the Keizer Charter Review Task Force to expect boredom as the group convened to offer guidance on revising the city charter. What happened next was anything but boring.

In the first 90 minute meeting, members of the task force discussed the possibility of establishing wards in Keizer and having city council representatives elected from each district, how long a mayor should have to sign new ordinances and what constitutes a quorum.

Resident Mike DeBlasi, a former candidate for city council and longtime volun-

The Keizer Charter Review Task Force spent time on topics other than the ones highlighted in the story. Here is some of the other language in the charter that led to discussion.

Current charter language	Task force discussion
The mayor shall appoint the council committees provided by the rules of the council.	This language launched a discussion of who is responsible for appointing committee members. Currently, the council appoints the members, but that deviates from the wording in the charter. There appeared to be overwhelming support for the council appointing members as a whole over the mayor as a solo agent.

teer on city advisory boards, posed the idea of separating the city into wards for the purpose of electing city council

representatives. DeBlasi said a survey of city councilors during the past 25 years, using names and tax records,

showed that "only two council members have been from the southeast portion of the city. I didn't get everybody's address but I think that speaks to why we need a district or ward system."

DeBlasi, a member of the city's traffic safety committee, suggested adding to the charter language requiring all modes of transportation to be treated equally when infrastructure repairs or improvements are made.

"Only two council members have been from the southeast portion of the city."

— Mike DeBlasi

The city council commissioned the task force to review the city charter for possible updates with an eye toward removing

Section 44, a portion of the charter that marginalizes LGBTQ+ residents. Any changes would have to be put before voters. The hope is to do so sometime in 2020 when the costs will be minimized.

On the topic of wards, the Please see CHARTER, Page A5



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