

COVID-19 fears rock Keizer

Concerns over spread of virus empties shelves, limits services

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

The first confirmed death of an Oregon patient in connection with COVID-19 was recorded Saturday, March 14.

A 70-year-old veteran died at a Portland hospital from COVID-19.

Coronavirus has continued to spread in Oregon and throughout the country as new cases of the virus are confirmed on a nearly hourly basis.

As of Wednesday, March 18, Oregon's new COVID-19 cases bring the state's total of positive tests for the virus to 75. So far, more than 1,500 residents of the state have been tested for the flu-like virus. More than

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Keizer was not immune to panic-buying that drained local inventories of paper products and sanitizers. A few packages of paper towels were all that was left of Safeway's stock Monday afternoon, March 16. KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald



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She died while homeless in Keizer, we found out who she was before that happened



Submitted photos

SHARON RENE PRITCHARD 1967 - 2020

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

On a chilly night in February, Sharon Rene Pritchard, 52, stepped off the sidewalk on River Road North and was struck by a sport utility vehicle traveling south as she tried to cross the street.

Sharon was dead by the time police arrived on the scene minutes later.

For one of Sharon's former partners, Rachel Chavarria, the circumstances of Sharon's death didn't match what she knew of the person.

"Sharon would have been against suicide. She was highly religious and she believed that if you took your own life, you wouldn't go to Heaven," Rachel said.

Police and medical officials don't assign motives in incidents such as these, but this is some of what was known about the circumstances: Sharon had clinically-diagnosed post-traumatic stress disorder and, at times, severe paranoia; it was relatively cool at 43 degrees the time of the collision; and she had struggled with alcoholism for decades. Blood test results that might indicate intoxication had not been recorded by press time.

Sharon was also homeless,

which is why Lt. Bob Trump of the Keizer Police Department struggled with how to phrase her circumstances in a press release. He ended up going with "recently resided at various locations in the Salem/Keizer area."

The sum total of all those circumstances — the mental health problems and the struggle with substance abuse that was likely taking a toll on her health physical at this point — meant that Sharon fell into a category of people known as tri-morbid. People with housing can be tri-morbid and maintain a relatively normal life. However, once shelter is removed

from that equation, researchers can predict the age when they are most likely to die on the streets. It's 52. (See related story, *Lack of shelter*, Page A7.)

Sharon might have had clinical diagnoses and designations that make her death easy to categorize, but she was also a sister, a daughter, an aunt, a friend, a lover and a veteran. She was a person with a life, full stop. This is part of her story.

Sharon was born on August 13, 1967, in central California's Sonora. She had one older

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"What really affected her was driving through the war zone and seeing bodies in the streets."

— Rachel Chavarria
Former partner



Keizer Fire survives virus scare unscathed

By MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

On Wednesday, March 11, six Keizer Fire District personnel (five paramedics and one volunteer) were self-quarantining at their homes after caring for and transporting a patient that later tested positive for COVID-19.

The plan was originally to have the group remain at home for 14 days on the advice of the Marion County Health Department. But as of Friday, March 13, four of the six were able to end their quarantine due to the fact that they did not have any direct contact with the individual according to KFD Deputy Fire Marshal Ann-Marie Storms.

The two employees that are still quarantined are the two members of the ambulance crew that responded to the call, which happened on Thursday, March 5. However, neither are showing symptoms.

KFD has 28 first responders on staff, nine of which are all on duty during a shift, so having five paramedics on leave was a hit to the day-to-day operations. However, Storms said that the loss of employees is similar to what happens when the district gets hit with a sickness, or is responding to a large fire in the summer.

"The staff numbers didn't change, we just had some people working overtime,"

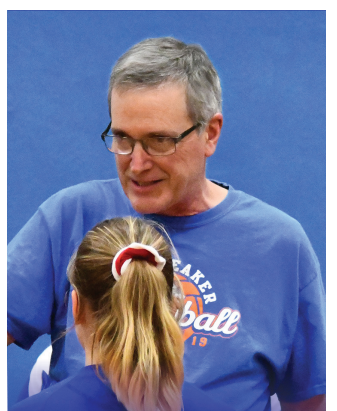
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Four Celts land full ride Act Six scholarships
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Coburn leaving behind a lasting legacy
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With a cluck-cluck here and a quack-quack there

City may ease rules on backyard birds

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

Keizer residents will be able to open their yards and hearts to more chickens — and add ducks to the mix — if a recommendation by the Keizer Planning Commission passes muster with the Keizer

City Council.

Planning commissioners met Wednesday, March 11, and debated the changes which came at the request of Keizer city councilors.

Keizer currently limits the number of hens allowed in yards to three and that would

change to six under the revised code. The proposed revisions also open the door to ducks of both genders.

The city would also eliminate a no-cost permit to keep chickens in urban areas, but require that chickens remain in coops and covered runways unless under direct supervision of the owner.

Commissioners and city staff deferred having a larger

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