

Policing with minority perspectives in mind

Keizer's police chief on combating white privilege and the way police departments can change for the better

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

Thirty years ago, Keizer Police Chief John Teague had his worldview reset when an acquaintance told him he saw a "black man" in the mirror every morning.

"I found it remarkable that his race was that prevalent to him," said Teague, who is white. In the aftermath of that conversation, he started paying closer attention to the ways in which race is used to hinder the progress of minorities.

"A while back, Wells Fargo was taken to task for charging people of color higher rates for their mortgages than white folks. Just imagine if you're a respectable, hardworking, successful, really good, admirable man and, for all that effort, you're getting dinged on your mortgage payment because you're black."

In a 2015 study published by the National Institute of Health, more than 93 percent of roughly 300 black, male participants reported feeling stress. Almost two-thirds attributed additional stress to money and finances, 43 percent replied with racism as a specific cause.

"If you're a black person and you are told all the time that cops stop you because of race and you see other black men being stopped, all those things eat at you, you question all of them," Teague said. "I don't know about you



but, when I'm in those situations, I feel it in my gut."

Teague said he was once falsely accused of something in the town where he lives and not knowing what others thought of him began to color his interactions with other people in the city. Aside from making Teague aware of himself in new ways, he also had to break down barriers others might have erected in the wake of the accusation. He found some guidance in a book titled *Whistling Vivaldi and Other Clues to How Stereotypes Affect Us* by Claude Steele.

"The author is a rather imposing black man and he writes about

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TOP: Keizer Police Chief John Teague (right) welcomes two new officers to the Keizer Police Department.

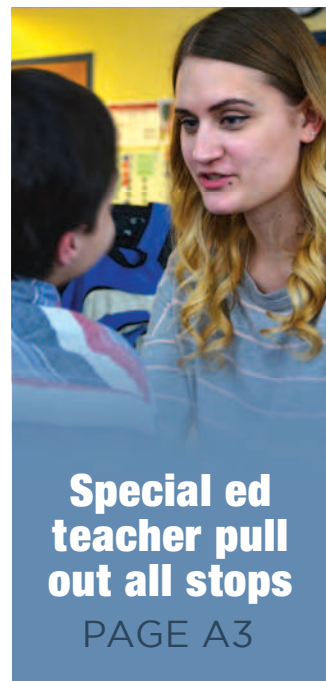
RIGHT: Protesters took to Keizer streets last week.

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Eric A. Howald



Celt heads to EOU lacrosse team
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SKEF dissolving at month's end
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Special ed teacher pull out all stops
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Ebbs earns Gatorade title
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Council hosting first hearing on charter changes

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

The Keizer City Council will hold the first of two public hearings on changes to the Keizer City Charter at its meeting Monday, June 15.

The second public hearing will be held on July 6. Both meetings are held at the Keizer Civic Center beginning at 7 p.m.

The council will be discussing changes to the charter, the city's founding document, recommended by a task force that spent the past six months scrutinizing every word and comma. The council convened the task force with an eye toward removing a section that marginalizes LGBTQ+ residents.

The removal of the offending section, Section 44, is the major change recommended by the task force, but its members also found other ways to make the document more inclusive, such as using less gendered language throughout the document.

"We were careful to make sure that we were changing the language to gender neutral language. Our task force picked apart every little word and did it with the intention of making this a long-term document. Our city and

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KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald

Nate Brown retires after 17 years

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

A couple of years ago, Keizer Community Development Director Nate Brown used a multimedia presentation to illustrate how making a seemingly minor change to the city sign code – permitting more frequent changes to electronic signs – would impact River Road North.

Even with visual aids showing the change of messages, and how they might distract drivers and contribute to visual clutter, it was hard to envision the impact. But the lesson Brown was trying to impart was drawn, quite literally, from history and a trip to Rome.

"When you look at what the Romans built ... our perspective has to be broader. We are in the prenatal stages of creating that kind of legacy and we have to understand

that our actions today—even incremental ones—affect us in getting where we want to be," Brown said. "We are a direct descendant of what the Romans did."

The past few years have been busy ones for the Keizer Planning Department and Brown was at the forefront of several projects that will inform most decisions about how Keizer will grow. In that regard, he's retiring from the role on a high note. Brown's last day as a city employee was Friday, May 29, but he's already got a new gig lined up in Washington state to keep him busy for the next year. Eventually, he wants to get back to international travel and soak up more of the history that led all of us to the present day.

Brown began his tenure with Keizer in

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"Those people really kept my engine running for all those years. I have no regrets and a lot of good experiences."
— Nate Brown

Two years in, what have city fees accomplished?

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

In late 2017, the Keizer City Council enacted two \$4 fees supporting police and park services.

After two full years of fee collection, the fees have paid for \$1.3 million in parks improvements and given the Keizer Police Department the leeway to focus on underlying problems rather than running from fire to fire.

Keizer Police Chief John Teague and Bill Lawyer and Robert Johnson, of Keizer Public Works, prepared reports for the budget season that didn't get as much airing as anticipated during budget talks. The COVID-19 pandemic prompted a different set of discussions and took the focus off the fees. At one point earlier in the year, there were talks of escalating the police fee and one city councilor floated the idea of reducing the parks fee to accommodate the increase for police services.

POLICE SERVICES

"The fee lets us do two things," wrote Teague. "It provides resources to night shift patrols and for traffic enforcement, both necessary whether we have the fee or not, but not at the expense of preventing crime. "It also supplies ... stratified responsibility, crime analysis and dedicated policing

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