

POLICE, continued from Page A1

walking down the sidewalk and people would get out of his way," Teague said. "So he began whistling some of some tunes from Vivaldi, which are typically very upbeat. And he said, just by doing that, people would look him in the eye and they would acknowledge him and say, 'Hi.' Members of the minority are carrying a burden that white folks don't have, like it or not."

Overcoming the unwitting and overt ways race impacts our daily interactions requires a more complete understanding of how any minority experience differs from the white experience of this country. Black Americans are regularly told to be skeptical of police and then a video surfaces that provides the evidence to support it. Black parents have to have conversations with children about police that do not resemble the ones white families have in any way. By contrast, many white people are often told that the United States is nearly infallible and that any evidence to the contrary should be met with similar skepticism.

Teague mentions summons up a quote he came across in a book about the black experience, *Stamped from the Beginning*, by Ibram X. Kendi, "We have no patterns for relating across our human differences as equals."

Audre Lorde, a black, lesbian poet and author is the source of that quote. The lead-in to the portion Teague mentioned provides context and is just as enlightening: "Institutionalized rejection of difference is an absolute necessity in a profit economy which needs outsiders as surplus people. As members of such an economy, we have all been programmed to respond to the human difference between us with fear and loathing and to handle that difference in one of three ways: ignore it, and if that is not possible, copy it if we think it is dominant, or destroy it if we think it is subordinate."

These are the kinds of things Teague is thinking about as a leader in the Keizer Police Department and policing efforts throughout the state. Teague described himself as a "gun-carrying, homeschooling, conservative Christian" at an event several years ago regarding race relations and Marion County police officials,

CHARTER, continued from Page A1

community will continue to change and this is a document that will survive the changes," said Councilor Elizabeth Smith at a city council work session Monday, June 8. Smith also chaired the charter review task force.

Other recommendations include reordering some sections of the charter for clarity and making it easier to read and understand. While some larger changes were discussed, such as switching to electing city councilors by district or ranked-choice voting, not enough members of the task force voted to move forward on those matters. Despite not making the cut, residents are welcome to talk with the council about support or opposition to such changes during the public hearings as the council has the final say.

Upon approval by the city council, the changes to the charter will be turned into a ballot measure and sent to voters in November. Voters must approve all changes to the charter.

Readers can review the existing language alongside the proposed changes at keizertimes.com.

COVID-19 has created a greater need for donations to the Keizer Community Food Bank. Please consider donating food or financial help.

Sharing stories creates connection between strangers. Each of these black writers shares pieces of their story, thoughts on black history and insights into what brought us to this point through their books. All of them are good starting points and invitations to a broader understanding of American experience.

We Should All be Feminists
by Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche

Between the World and Me
We Were Eight Years in Power
by Ta-Nehisi Coates

Well-Read Black Girl by Glory Edim

Democracy in Black
by Eddie S. Glaude

This Will Be My Undoing
by Morgan Jenkins

Stamped From the Beginning
and How to be an Anti-Racist
by Ibram X. Kendi

Heavy by Kiese Laymon

Citizen: An American Lyric
by Claudia Rankine

but those labels – and their opposites – only scratch the surface of any person.

"They don't touch who I am," Teague said. "That comes from somewhere else, and I can appreciate and understand how Benny Williams [president of the Marion County NAACP] or Roland Herrera [a Keizer city councilor] have to go through life differently than I do. It's a matter of getting to know people and know their experiences."

With that lens, Teague has a different take on recent police protests and that actions that led up to them.

"The acute problem is what happened to George Floyd, but the chronic, more pernicious problem is what happened to Christian Cooper," Teague said.

Days before Floyd died under the knee of Minneapolis Police Department Officer Derek Chauvin, Cooper was watching birds in New York City's Central Park when a white woman called police on him for asking her to leash her dog.

Teague said firing Chauvin in a moment of passionate uprising turns the situation political when what both residents and police officers need is clear lines of "procedural justice."

"We have to build cultures within our agencies that give people on the street procedural justice. Where we treat them with dignity and respect, where we give them a chance to be heard, where we convey trustworthy motives, where we make reasonable, informed, transparent decisions," he said. "When you look at video and call a guy guilty and fire him, I guarantee you, you're not giving him the chance to be heard. You're not making reasonable, informed decisions. You're not conveying trustworthy motives. You're conveying political motives."

The type of swift, political action made when the offending officer was fired – before an investigation was complete – strengthens "the blue wall" of silence on behalf of police officers, Teague said. "If you don't build a culture

of procedural justice, a fairness within your agency, how can you expect the cops to hold each other accountable?" Teague said.

Building strong police agencies means adhering to strict codes of procedural justice from the outset, Teague said. While many police chiefs loathe dealing with personnel problems, Teague believes they are among the most essential training tools.

"Those are absolute gold because you get to build, over time, the reputation within your agency of how you're going to handle things and how you're going to treat people with respect," he said.

One of the issues facing police more broadly is the access to research on what makes for the best practices and, Teague said, even when there is ample access, the resulting recommendations and resources to implement them are aimed at large agencies, like NYPD or LAPD. To combat the oversight, Teague helped establish the Center for Policing Excellence at the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, home of Oregon's police academy among other programs. The goal of the project is to connect police officers at all levels with the best research to inform how they do the day-to-day work.

Making sure racially charged incidents don't arise from the Keizer Police Department comes down to hiring officers that meet a set of qualifications beyond knowing when to use force and how to do it when the situation requires it, Teague said.

"We don't test for policing skills in new recruits, we can teach those," he said. "We test for courage, conscientiousness, a sense of justice, empathy, helpfulness and humility. That's it. That's who we look for."

He pointed to a recent issue with a regular gathering of car owners in Keizer Station, some participants would attempt burnouts as they left the event, creating danger for those at the gathering as well as those in the shopping center for other reasons.

"Most agencies would go up there and start laying tickets on people. Well, that doesn't do a darn thing for anybody except cost those kids money and time. It does not build legitimacy at all," Teague said.

Instead, a Keizer officer tracked down the organizer and asked if they could speak about what is happening. It turned out the man had moved to Keizer from California to get away from gangs and he had been attempting to discourage the burnouts already while providing an outlet for local enthusiasts.

"My guys are awesome. They totally get this," Teague said.

Teague hopes that instituting forward-facing, procedural justice in the Keizer Police Department soon makes its way to other agencies as its officers make their way to other communities.

The drawback to Teague's approach is it will take time and, as nationwide protests have demonstrated, many are tired of waiting.

Contact the reporter at editor@keizertimes.com.

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