

KeizerCommunity

KEIZERTIMES.COM



Submitted

Isabella Biondi's pieces, *Coat* and *Sunset Wanderer*, are displayed in the Keizer Civic Center along with a collection of her other work.

Commission names emerging artist

Keizer teen Isabella Biondi had a milestone day on Jan. 19.

Biondi was recognized as part of the Student/Emerging Artist program offered by the Keizer Public Arts Commission and was ap-

pointed to the committee as its youth liaison.

Biondi will have four pieces – *Sunset Wanderer*, *Nighttime Vibes*, *Icarus Fashion* and *Coat* – displayed on a wall reserved for youth artists at the Keizer Civic Center.

Civic Center clean-up March 31

At least 100 volunteers are needed to help clean up around the Keizer Civic Center Saturday, March 31.

Each year, the Rotary Club of Keizer and Claggett Creek Watershed Council host a morning of work ranging from picking up trimmings from trees, shrubs and grasses to removing weeds and more.

The clean-up is scheduled from 9 a.m. to noon, but many hands make light work and could mean a quicker finish. Pandemic-related safety protocols will be in effect throughout the effort.

Volunteers can simply show up the day of the event and are encouraged to bring wheelbarrows, plastic trash cans, rakes, tarps, pruners, weed pullers and other tools that might be useful.

Unless there is an inch or more of snow on the ground, the effort will not be canceled. Long pants, sturdy shoes, gloves, hats and coats are encouraged.

The Keizer Civic Center is located at 930 Chemawa Road N.E. A collection box and disposal are being donated by Loren's Sanitation.

Serve on the Claggett watershed council

The Claggett Creek Watershed Council (CCWC) is seeking volunteers from the community to serve on its General Council (board of directors).

Currently there are three opportunities: a property owner adjacent to Claggett Creek; a resident of Salem; and a resident of unincorporated Marion County.

The CCWC is involved in the local community through its stewardship of the Claggett Creek watershed and attendant natural resources. This involvement is aimed at the development and implementation of sustainable practices for enhancing and restoring watershed health while recognizing the need to balance a variety of environmental, social, and economic interests.

For more information contact Mark Caillier by email markcaillier@claggettccwc.org, call or text 503-930-7481 or go to www.claggettccwc.org or find the group's page on Facebook.

Nominations due for Chamber awards

The Keizer Chamber of Commerce is looking for award nominees in several categories leading up to the annual First Citizen's Event Saturday, March 20.

Awards are presented for First Citizen, Service to Education and Merchant of the Year. Nomination forms can be downloaded at tinyurl.com/2dzkhtj. Nominations are due by March 7. They can be emailed to corri@keizerchamber.com or mailed to the Chamber office at 4118 River Road N. Keizer, OR 97303.

Qualifications in each category are:

First Citizen Award – given to an individual(s) that exemplified City of Keizer's motto of Pride, Spirit, and Volunteerism within their work, volunteerism, or activism for the community. Nominations should include involvement during the past five years and detail how the nominee has dedicated time and/or talent to benefit the quality of life of our past, present, or future.

Service to Education Award – given to an individual that is a Keizer area administrator, teacher or volunteer. Nominee should be actively involved in the community and has made an outstanding contribution to the betterment of education. Nominee must serve, volunteer, or dedicate time and/or talent to benefit the youth of Keizer.

Merchant of the Year Award – given to an individual and/or business that did the most in 2020 for the Keizer Business Community. Nominee must be a Keizer Chamber member and have assisted moving forward the organizations objectives, including developing the current and future workforce, promoting Keizer, advocating for business and economic development in government relations, servicing members, and assuring organizational vitality.

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McNary teachers earn honor from district

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

Even though they haven't seen their students in person for almost a year, McNary teachers Ashley Gruber, Andy Thomas and Josh Rist have rallied together over the last 11 months to collaborate their classes (media production, choir and audio production).

"In the arts, we always had a collaborative mindset, but we had to move to the next level for distance learning," Thomas said.

The virtual collaboration effort started in March 2020 when an individual suggested to Rist that the McNary choir put together a socially distanced performance.

"I knew how much work would go into it. I wasn't going to even try and do it by myself, which is why I reached out to Ashley and Andy asking for help," Rist said.

Rist instructed his students to film themselves singing to the melody of "Smile" by Nat "King" Cole and then send their finished product to Gruber and Thomas, who had their kids' work on the editing and audio production.

The final product was released on YouTube in May and has received nearly 5,000 views. The performance was also featured on KGW.com

"It was definitely a ton of work, but because there were many hands and minds involved, it actually was a lot better together than it would have been apart. That kind of made us realize that our programs sync together super well," Rist said.

The three teachers have continued to have their stu-

dents collaborate on projects over the last several months, including a project in which kids virtually created scenes of *The Princess Bride*, as well as a performance of *Happy Christmas* by John Lennon.

"It just made sense because it gave the kids stuff to do to get that hands-on experience of working with others... When you're doing stuff with other people and for other people, it gives you a little more pride and a little more responsibility," Gruber said "I have seen kids grow a ton in their skill because they want to show that they care."

Most recently, the crew created a video during the holidays featuring numerous students partaking in activities at their house while the McNary choir gives a virtual performance of *Home* by Phillip Phillips.

The collaborations didn't go unnoticed by the Salem-Keizer School District. On Jan. 12, during a Salem-Keizer school board meeting, the three teachers were given the Spotlight on Success honor for their efforts during comprehensive distance learning.

"This partnership between classes provides unique and

collaborative opportunities that have been both therapeutic and helpful during this pandemic, while simultaneously preparing (students) to a pathway for future success," McNary principal Erik Jespersen said during the board meeting. "We're so proud of our educators and students. Working together is what we're all about here at McNary, and it's inspiring to see the caliber of work of these students and teachers that have been created in their living rooms."

After giving virtual instruction for nearly a year, Gruber, Thomas and Rist are preparing for limited in-person instruction later this month. Now that all three of their classrooms are connected thanks to the renovations from the McNary bond project, the opportunity for many more collaborations between the departments could increase dramatically.

"I think you're going to see, once we get kids in the building and once we get down to our routines, that this will become a part of the normal culture at McNary, between these departments," Rist said.

"The fun is just beginning," Thomas added.

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