

# RIST: 'It was an overwhelming surprise...' *Continued from page A15*

"I just decided to go for it. I just saw it as a place where I could see myself thriving," Rist said.

Rist has now been at McNary for four years and has fallen in love with the place where he teaches.

"I love that McNary is so well integrated into the community and I appreciate the small town loyalty that we have," Rist said. "I love the vision of the high school and I believe in what our leadership is doing. I also really like the demographics and that we have so many kids coming from different walks of life."

Rist not only has a deep love for music, but also a passion for teaching and developing close relationships with his students, which is why it was rough on him to be away from his students for over a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I love music and believe that it is essential to life and community. But the choral aspect means a lot to me because of the relationships that it creates with students," Rist said. "The rich and in-depth connection with kids is what I love and is why I feel a philosophical calling to continue this work."

During the year of distance learning, Rist took the situation as a challenge to work even harder for his students. In May, Rist instructed his students to film themselves singing to a rendition of "Smile" by Nat "King" Cole. With the help of fellow teachers Ashley Gruber and Andy Thomas, Rist was able to create a virtual choral performance of the song on YouTube — the

video has nearly 5,000 views and was featured on KGW.

Then, in October, Rist created a choir club that involved students making their own Soundtrap projects online and sharing them with their classmates — Soundtrap is an online cross-platform digital audio workstation that allows users to create music. The club put together multiple performances, using Soundtrap to sing and layer each section of the song to make it sound like they were singing together.

Rist's dedication and commitment to his students, despite the obstacles of distance learning, was one of the main reasons he was selected for the Service to Education Award.

"I am so proud of him. Anyone who has gotten to know him knows how special of a man he is. He is an excellent educator and a wonderful human with infectious positivity. This award couldn't have gone to a better guy," Jespersen said. "From a musical standpoint, Josh obviously knows his stuff. But what makes him unique is how he brings out the most in people and how he gives kids confidence. He did a tremendous job making the most out of this year."

Even though he has found an effective way to reach his kids during the pandemic, Rist is elated to have his students back in

the new choir room at the newly renovated school — McNary students will begin coming back to in-person classes on April 13.

"This last year was by no means a wash. I feel like I have a whole new skill-set and have found a new way of assessing kids' progress. I'm grateful for the experience, but I am so thrilled to be able to teach in-person," Rist said. "There is so much anticipation."

Questions or concerns? Contact the reporter via email: [news@keizertimes.com](mailto:news@keizertimes.com)

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## Saint Edward plans Spring Food festival

St. Edward Catholic Church is hosting the 2021 Step into Spring Food Fest on May 15-16.

The event will be available on Saturday, May 15, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday, May 16, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Step into Spring is a walk in event.

Multiple nonprofit organizations will be providing goods that people can purchase at the event. St. Edward's Youth Group and Boy Scouts will offer Italian soda, iced coffee and Schreiner's iris bouquets. St. Edward will offer Berliner sandwiches. St. Edward's Hispanic parishioners will offer tamales, Gervais Knights of Columbus will offer barbecue chicken, Father Taaffe Homes will offer Oktoberfest sausage, Michael the Archangel Pregnancy Center will offer cinnamon rolls and St. Joseph School will offer baked potatoes. Plans also include dessert items.

## Caption It!

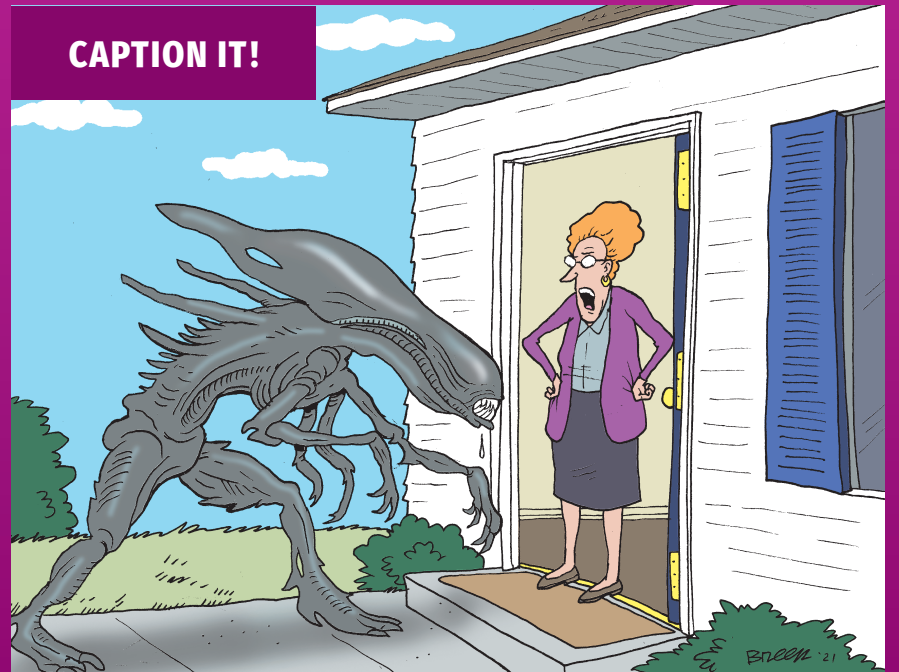
By STEVE BREEN

ARCHIVE WINNER



"EVERYONE AT THIS PARTY LOOKS SO OLD."  
— Terence Sherbondy, Rocklin, CA

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