

# Guilty as Charged on Facebook

A look at the Keizer Police Department's use of social media

BY JOEY CAPPELLETTI  
Of the Keizertimes

On the morning of Nov. 10, 2021, Monica Batsell was driving her two children to school when she struck the back of a parked city of Keizer service truck.

Keizer police arrived and upon investigation, arrested Batsell for driving under the influence of intoxicants, reckless endangerment and reckless endangerment of a highway worker, according to the Keizer Police Department.

Two days later, the Keizer Police Department described the incident in a Facebook post that included Batsell's name, age, hometown, arrest charges and photos of the crash. The post said that investigators believed "alcohol was a contributing factor to this crash" and that Batsell's two children, who were minors, were in the car.

Facebook's verdict was immediate. Over 160 comments racked up on the

post and it was shared 66 times. Many of the comments insulted Batsell as a mother, with some pointing out that she was a local business owner.

"A disgusting woman/mom. No reason for her to have those children. They should be taken away from her. She has no respect for them nor herself! Should be in jail," one comment said.

Others wrote, "8 a.m. under the influence and driving with kids. Get some help before you kill someone," and "Her children need to be taken away!"

Batsell's case highlights the aggressive use of social media by the Keizer Police Department. Hundreds of likes, comments and shares accrue on these posts as the public weighs in on incidents days after they've occurred. The department is unapologetic about their use of Facebook and say they don't monitor comments

How is it fair that somebody's worst moment, everyone's allowed to have this entire conversation about it. Like this completely public stream where anyone can say anything.

— MONICA BATSELL  
Keizer resident

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Keizer Police Department

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Since the start of 2020, the Keizer Police Department has posted a total of 17 arrest incidents on their Facebook page where the arrested person's name was included. In 13 of those posts, a booking photo was also included.



364

472 Comments

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Disclaimer: Not an actual Keizer Police Department Facebook post.

Graphic by LOGAN TURBES of the Keizertimes

— nor do they plan to.

"Who am I to regulate somebody's free speech? It truly is free speech. If you don't like what you're seeing, don't go to that website," said Lt. Trevor Wenning, the Keizer Police Department's public information officer.

It's been almost two months since the incident and Batsell doesn't defend her decision to drive that day. In an interview with the Keizertimes, Batsell said that she had been drinking late the night before and had woken up hungover — with alcohol still in her bloodstream.

She was blindsided, however, when she saw the police department's post.

"I saw a lot of like complete strangers

sharing it on their own social media. It was like rapid fire," Batsell said. "I was getting hate mail from total strangers telling me that I needed my children taken away and that I'm a horrible mother. People even went so far as to dive and look into my criminal history and bring some of that stuff, which is over 11 years old."

Batsell said that she fell into a depression after the incident and even changed her Facebook profile to her maiden name in hopes it would make it more difficult for people to send hate messages. She said people even began commenting on her business's Facebook page.

See FACEBOOK, page A2



## Phil Bay dies at 85

Phil Bay, one of Keizer's original city councilors and most notable volunteers, passed away on the morning of Jan. 5 at the age of 85.

A memorial service for Bay will take place at 1 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 17 at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints at the corner of 14th

St. and Lockhaven Dr.

Bay served on the city council from 1983 to 1991 and helped organize city services ranging from water and police to setting policies that still guide the city.

He was also a founding member of the Keizer Heritage Foundation board, a volunteer firefighter and a founding member of the Keizer Chamber of Commerce.

On April 19, 2021, the Keizer City Council adopted a proclamation honoring Bay for his long history of service to the Keizer community, it included his own day, Sept. 10.