

# KEIZERTIMES PUBLIC SQUARE

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## Moving KeizerFEST in time and place

The organizers of KeizerFEST (nee Keizer Iris Festival) have formally requested approval from the city of Keizer to move the event to Keizer Rapids Park, and make it the permanent home of our largest community event.

At long last, the festival grounds will have a home worthy of its history and potential. There are many issues and challenges that need to be addressed before this year's festival, planned for the second weekend of August.

When it was the Iris Festival, holding the event in May was required to take advantage of peak iris bloom season. Keizer carries the moniker of the iris capital of the world; it proved to be a good branding and marketing tool for the city for more than 30 years.

The event was always more a celebration of Keizer rather than a celebration of a flower. The community can celebrate itself as easily in August as it can in May. The weather is much more predictable at the end of summer.

Keizer Rapids Park will offer some elbow room for the all the elements of the festival, that include the main tent, vendor booths and activities. There are many other events held at the park that fit just fine.

For years Keizerites were reminded the festival was coming when they saw

## Editorial

a big white tent being erected in the center of town. That won't be the case with KeizerFEST being moved to Keizer Rapids Park, but that can be overcome with banners along River Road directing residents and visitors alike down to the end of Chemawa Road.

The most popular part of the festival is the parade. The pandemic really did a number on the parade in recent years; it once was one of the largest parades in Oregon. By August mask mandates should be lifted completely. That should return attendance at KeizerFEST and in the parade to pre-pandemic levels.

It is expected that traditionalists will grumble about moving KeizerFEST away from the city's core. Time marches on. Keizer has grown and offers fewer large plots of land to stage our beloved event.

Kudos to the organizers of the 2022 KeizerFEST for pushing for this move. Chamber of Commerce president Bob Shackelford has been working for months to assure the change will be good for Keizer and its citizens.

—LAZ

## The eloquence of Miranda Coleman

At the March 7 city council meeting, youth councilor, Miranda Coleman was presented with a proclamation made by Mayor Cathy Clark, proclaiming the city's support for the people of Ukraine in the face of the invasion by Russia.

It was presented to Coleman due to her Ukrainian heritage.

In an emotional and thoughtful response, Coleman, a McNary High School student, relayed that she is the great-great-granddaughter of Ukrainian immigrants. In the early years of the 20th century, Coleman's ancestors settled in North Dakota. Forty years later they, and other Ukrainian immigrants headed to Oregon in search of better opportunities in agriculture and farming.

"It has been instilled in me to be proud of my Ukrainian heritage," Coleman told the councilors and audience.

She went on to say that Russian leader

Vladimir Putin underestimated the people of the country he invaded."Ukrainians are willing to fight for their homeland. They are courageous, resilient and they have shown the world they would die for their country," she continued.

Coleman said her heart breaks for the men, women and children who died at the hands of the invaders. "We must support them and advocate for them. They are just as important as we are."

She thanked Mayor Clark for the proclamation, saying, "It makes me proud to live in Keizer." She ended her remarks with words in Ukrainian.

Miranda Coleman was eloquent and her words were powerful, garnering her a standing ovation from the entire room. This is an example of how the youth of today can teach us adults a thing or two.

—LAZ



## Ready for the next step: becoming a CCRLS library

By **BILL LEACH**

The volunteer spirit, which has long set Keizer apart from other Oregon communities, is alive and well at the Keizer Community Library.

The COVID pandemic and mandated closures created a great opportunity for our community library to reinvent itself. With donations and volunteer hours, the library has been completely overhauled. The collection of books, audiobooks, movies and other resources has been reorganized and library cards are now free. You really need to come and see for yourself.

The library, which is currently an unfunded, non-profit organization, is only one step away from the state of Oregon designating the Keizer Community Library as a public library.

Why is public library status important?

For decades, Keizer residents have been paying taxes to support the Chemeketa Cooperative Regional Library Service (CCRLS) without receiving the full benefits enjoyed by the patrons of its 17-member public libraries. Public library status would qualify Keizer Community Library to join CCRLS as a full participating member. It would also open access to the funding opportunities that public libraries have available from federal, state, and other sources, which cannot currently be accessed.

Our community critically needs these resources. They would enable the library to have a positive impact on student achievement scores through expanded summer reading projects and other educational programs. They can help us provide support to our growing retirement communities

## Guest COLUMN

and full services for all residents. A public library in Keizer would continue to be a non-profit volunteer organization.

It is possible to become a public library without creating any tax increase for the citizens of Keizer. There is a proposal in front of the Keizer Long Range Planning Task Force asking the city to contract with the Keizer Community Library to provide public library services to the residents of Keizer. This \$125,000 annual contract can be funded for three years from the \$8.8 million federal COVID relief funds awarded to Keizer and will allow the library to hire a full-time librarian to organize and manage operations at the library, recruit and train the many volunteers who will continue to support our programs, and extend the hours of operation of the library. This funding fulfills the final remaining requirement set by the State of Oregon, allowing Keizer Community Library to reach public library status and membership in CCRLS.

We look forward to having the Long Range Planning Task Force recommend the Keizer Community Library contract funding in its proposal.

**(Submitted by Bill Leach, president of the Keizer Community Library board, on behalf of the board of directors.)**

# KEIZERTimes

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