

OFFICER: Can pick up truant kids, bring them back to school

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art projects, or read a book, or talk about things like bicycle safety.

“Sometimes I’ll just pop in and listen,” Shimer said. “For me personally, it’s a great mix.”

The idea of hiring a school resource officer has been discussed for years in Boardman, but the budget always seemed to stand in the way. Paying for an extra officer isn’t cheap, between salary, training, uniforms and equipment. Funding finally came together at the start of the school year last fall, with the Morrow County School District covering \$50,000 and another \$55,000 from the Columbia River Enterprise Zone.

Boardman Police Chief Rick Stokoe said they tabbed Shimer to fill the role based on his ability to build a rapport with students. Shimer used to teach junior and senior high school Spanish for 17 years before he came to Boardman. His wife, Marie Shimer, is also the principal of Riverside Junior-Senior High School.

Shimer is bilingual, which is especially handy in a district where nearly 55 percent of students are Hispanic. He divides his time between all three schools in town, including Riverside, Sam Boardman and Windy River Elementary. His job is more than just patrolling the hallways; he has to be someone the students feel comfortable talking to when they notice something wrong.

“It’s about the rapport with the kids,” he said. “That’s been a major asset for me, because I already know how to build that.”

In addition, Shimer is teaching a new class specifically for high schoolers through the Police Explorers



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Boardman Police officer George Shimer talks to second-graders about bike safety recently at Sam Boardman Elementary School in Boardman.

program, which offers students an introductory look into careers with law enforcement. Seven students have signed up for the class, which can be taken for school credit.

School safety is, of course, a major concern across the country, Stokoe said. He’s fought for a school resource officer since he became Boardman’s police chief five years ago. Already, he said kids are opening up and sharing information with Shimer that they normally wouldn’t share.

“We’ve won if we can get those kids on our side,” Stokoe said.

Sometimes Shimer said he’ll hear a report about drugs in the school, or a student who’s cutting class. Boardman has a daytime curfew on the books, which allows Shimer to pick up truant kids and bring them back to school.

Other times, Shimer’s visits are quiet and uneventful, save for the kids who wave



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Lead custodian Curtis Johnson talks with Boardman Police officer George Shimer about safety upgrades to Windy River Elementary School recently in Boardman.

and holler as he passes by. That’s taken time to get to this point.

“You could definitely see it in the kids’ faces at first. They didn’t trust me at all,” Shimer said. “Now, they’re not afraid to talk to me.”

School administrators have taken notice, too. Sarah Kimmell, principal at Sam

Boardman Elementary — which enrolls kindergarten through third grade — said Shimer is already challenging students’ stereotypes about police at the youngest level.

They don’t seem to be afraid of him when he walks around. In fact, they like seeing him,” Kimmell said.

Morrow County Superin-

MARKET: Has been on Main Street for 13 years

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wrote the city wouldn’t issue a future street closure permit “unless the market proposes a plan to the City that addresses these concerns.”

McCune disputed the assertion that the market had violated the city’s stipulation by allowing vendors to park their trucks in restricted parking spaces.

Keith May, the owner of MaySon’s and a former Pendleton city councilor, declined to comment on the matter but said he wishes the farmers market success.

In an interview Monday, Corbett said he had also advised the market to move vendor booths to the center of Main Street rather than by the

sidewalk curbs, similar to the Main Street Cowboy set-up during Round-Up week.

McCune said the farmers market board looked into the idea, but concerns over space, shade and lanes for emergency vehicles led members to determine it wasn’t a feasible move.

Mark Royal, owner of Rolling Stone Bakery, has a foot in both camps. After spending three years selling his baked goods as a farmers market vendor, Royal retired from his day job and opened a storefront on Main Street a block south of the market.

He still closes Rolling Stone early on farmers market Fridays to return to vending, and isn’t pleased about the

impending move.

“That’s a sad deal,” he said.

Although Royal understands how the farmers market could disrupt some downtown businesses, he said the market brings important exposure to Main Street merchants.

Royal said he wished the city had conducted a survey of downtown businesses to get a clearer picture of how all the merchants felt.

Corbett said he didn’t know the number of downtown store owners who complained about the market’s presence, but he’s talked with several businesses that have sympathized with Main Street merchants’

plight.

“It doesn’t matter if it’s one or 100 (who complain), I have to protect downtown businesses,” Corbett said.

Ultimately, the market board decided to move on to a different location.

McCune is working on confirming the market’s new site and expects to announce it publicly by the end of the week.

While Main Street has been the farmers market only home since its inception 13 years ago, McCune views the move as a positive development, with Royal saying he’ll follow the market wherever it goes.

“We’ll move and we’ll be happy,” McCune said.

RAND: Gave the center new direction

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Rand grew up in Boise with his parents Tom and Barbara. He inherited his passion of the outdoors from his father. Kip Rand loved and lived the outdoors, pursuing rock-climbing, rafting, kayaking and backcountry skiing with equal intensity. In the midst of this, he earned a resource management degree from the University of Montana in Missoula. Those who knew him said his sharp mind easily could have propelled him to graduate school, but he was too busy living the outdoor dream to immerse himself in the scholar’s life.

Conlee Brown — owner of Wallowa Alpine Huts and Rand’s former employer — said he met the young man around 2010 at Row Adventures, a river outfitter based in Couer d’Alene. It was there that Rand met his longtime girlfriend Robin Davenport, also working for the outfitter. By his early 20s, Rand already was a veteran of traditional ski areas, but after talking with Brown, he became fascinated with the Wallowas and the backcountry skiing program offered at his alpine huts.

“There is literally only a handful of people in the country doing what we’re doing in the Wallowas,” Brown said. “That’s what brought him to the area, working for me as one of the ski guides.”

Rand ended up working for Brown in the winters and

with Brown at Row Adventures in the summer. While working for Wallowa Alpine Huts, Rand had worked part-time for Wallowa Avalanche Center as a forecaster by collecting snow data for use in avalanche warnings. In October 2015, when the Avalanche Center executive director position came open, he jumped on it.

Rand quickly began giving the center a new sense of direction. Deputy director Julian Pridmore-Brown said he was well on the way toward turning the center into a sustainable entity before his death.

Brown, who has experienced eight similar tragedies over the years, doesn’t like calling the incident a freak accident.

“It was being in the wrong place at the wrong time, and nature dealt him a bad card,” Brown said. “That’s the worst part about it for us in this sport; despite our best efforts to manage risk, it’s never completely eliminated.”

Brown said he appreciated the way Rand threw himself into whatever he did and he wasn’t at all surprised by Rand’s success as a guide and Avalanche Center director.

“People were drawn to Kip because he had charisma. He knew how to relate and he knew how to communicate. In our job you need a lot of personality. As a guide, you’re in charge of 10 people, and charisma is the guide’s substance. I’ve had a lot of guys come up here that

have the technical skills, but not the personality.”

According to Brown, Rand didn’t just look at the Wallowas as a resource to exploit for his own personal benefit as a guide. He also was a passionate advocate for the wilderness, as was his nature.

“Our occupation is our advocacy,” Brown said. “We defend wilderness areas, we defend salmon in the rivers and we enjoy showing people these resources. We’re serving the resources by being stewards. It was a big part of who Kip was.”

As for Brown and the rest of the backcountry skiing community, although shaken by the tragedy, they refuse to cave in to despair. A celebration of Rand’s life Sunday at the Joseph Community Center drew more than 200 friends and acquaintances from as far away as Washington, D.C., and Montana. They shared their experiences with Rand through stories and connections, which revived the spirits of many, including Rand’s family.

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BRECKHEIMER: Changed plea to guilty in February of this year

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Her blood alcohol level after the crash was at least .15 percent, and the legal limit is .08 percent. This was Breckheimer’s second DUI conviction, the first coming in 2003 after she crashed into a Hermiston building.

Breckheimer was released from the hospital after treatment; she was arrested at her Hermiston home in June 2014.

Breckheimer initially pleaded not guilty to charges of first- and second-degree manslaughter, three counts of recklessly endangering another person, one count of reckless driving and one of driving under the influence of intoxicants. In Oregon, manslaughter is the charge for vehicular homicide, and the three counts of recklessly endangering another person refer to other drivers on the road.

In February of this year, Breckheimer changed her plea to guilty on one count of driving under the influence of intoxicants, three counts of recklessly endangering and one count of second-degree manslaughter. The state dismissed charges of reckless driving and first-degree manslaughter as part of the

agreement.

Breckheimer appeared in court Monday at the Stafford Hansel Government Center. In half of the courtroom, her friends and family cried audibly; in the other half, Baker’s friends and family sat stoically, waiting for the announcement.

Baker’s family declined to make a statement. Speaking quietly with her head down, Breckheimer said pleading guilty was the first step in atoning for what she had done.

“I just want to tell everyone here that I’m sorry for the pain that I’ve caused everybody,” she said. “I would never imagine that something like this could happen, and I just want to say I know it will never go away for me and it will never go away for anyone in this courtroom.”

A civil suit between Breckheimer and the victim’s family had already been settled.

A request by Breckheimer’s defense to have her transported on her own to custody was denied, and she was taken into custody from the courtroom.

Contact Jennifer Colton at jcolton@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4534.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Boardman Police officer George Shimer, third from left, helped to establish a police explorer scouts troop at Riverside High School in Boardman.

Police Explorers to hold April fundraiser

The Boardman Police Explorers will host a shooting competition next month to raise money for the first-year class.

Law enforcement, military and civilians are invited to come test their skills on Saturday, April 16 at the Boardman Range on North Rippee Road. Lunch is provided, and prizes will also be raffled during the day.

Check-in begins at 9 a.m. for both the handgun and rifle contests. Participants must be at least 21 years old and attend a safety meeting before each event. The cost is \$40 per person.

Registration is due by Monday, April 4. For more information or to register, contact George Shimer with the Boardman Police Department at shimerg@cityofboardman.com.

tendent Dirk Dirksen said a school resource officer has the ability to see students every day, and settle issues with students before they start.

“We’re trying to prevent things from getting to the point where we’d have to make a (police) call,” Dirksen said. “It’s all about building relationships, and making sure there’s an open communication.”

The Morrow County Sheriff’s Office has also started providing a full-time school resource officer in Irrigon and Heppner schools, Dirksen said. Deputy Todd Siex will shuttle between the two communities, which are

located about 50 miles from one another.

Stokoe said he is confident Boardman will be able to continue funding both the school resource and Police Explorers programs, as long as they continue seeing success.

“It’s all about building that rapport and contact with the kids, and letting them know we’re just like everyone else,” Stokoe said. “We’re not the bad guy. We’re here to help make a positive difference in their life.”

Contact George Plaven at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0825.

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