1979 - A problem needed a visionary solution!
Ray Cox and Rick Kuehn laid out 10 diamonds
Bob Newton brought in the National Guard
Volunteers and crews from the National Guard's 1249th Engineers Battalion went to work in 1980 to turn the Keizer Little League fields into a major park.
Just add seed and water for ten new fields!!
The fall, winter and spring of ’80-’81 was really fun.
The kids pitched in too!

No work, no play
When they found themselves with nowhere to play, they carved out their own fields.

All the hard work pays off
Among the young ballplayers enjoying the new Keizer Little League fields yesterday was Rachel Roberts, above.

10 times our investment!
Kind of bare, but ready for play
When a group of volunteers announced plans for a $400,000 baseball complex five years ago, there certainly were skeptics.

The volunteer group had about $40,000 on hand and planned to start in the spring and finish in the fall.

And finish it they did, one of the most impressive and complete sports complexes in the Pacific Northwest.

Ray Cox, one of several people who spent an entire summer building the complex, watched last week as the City Council assented to allow the volunteers to use the complex.

Cox is a civil engineer employed by Ross Brothers Construction Company north of Keizer.

His involvement in Little League began in 1977 when the oldest of his three sons began playing T-ball.

Cox decided to run for the Little League board and, in 1979, the group, with Bill Rumpf as president, decided to go ahead and build the park complex on the state land.

The property, adjacent to the Salem Parkway, was purchased by the state as part of the parkway acquisition. With the construction of the parkway projected at eight years off the league decided to go ahead and invest the improvements in the land.

The National Guard came out and improved the site, using the land to train guard members with heavy equipment.

Rick Kuehn laid out the original nine diamond complex, said Cox. Then the volunteers went to work.

They fenced the entire property and put rock down for a parking lot.

They put up fence, fence and more fence, said Cox. A concession stand and equipment trailer went in, and the seeding was done in the fall.

Cox remembers how he and many others spent their vacation time at the fields. And evenings and all weekend.

Kuehn, Rumpf, Bob Newton, Mike Gaynor, Dave Johnson, Mike Hilfiker, Roy Ebel, Larry Horn, Bob Bevens, Don Blevins, Gary Witmer, Gary Gogle, JoAnne Beilke and Del Fislar spent most of the summer at the fields, said Cox.

Although they are ones he remembers being there almost all the time on a good day we had 100 people out there.

“I’ve never been so glad to go back to work on Monday” Cox remembers, “we were out there— Saturday and Sunday for three months.”

An example of the heavy labor to be done, he says, was installing fence posts at the lower fields. Because of heavy rains vehicles couldn’t take the cement bags down so the men carried them, 50 pound bags, some 400 yards in the pouring rain. “We were standing in 6 inches of water when we dug the post holes” at one of the fields, he said.

The league is still in debt as a result of the field project, said Cox.

Part of the debt is a loan that Rumpf personally guaranteed for the league.

Another field was added a year later, bringing to ten the number of diamonds on Ridge Drive. Three of the fields are for softball and seven for baseball.

A problem with one of the fields came up a couple of years later when the parkway construction was going full steam.

State officials notified Little League that one of the fields was in the parkway right-of-way and would have to be moved within three days or be destroyed.

“I didn’t think it could be done,” said Cox, but about 40 people came out and, immediately following a Friday night game, they went to work.

“We picked it up, fences, base equipment, sod, everything and moved it 50 feet,” said Cox. “We built a field in three days.” A game was played on the field Tuesday night.

“There are a lot of dads in Keizer who can now make a living installing fence or irrigation pipes,” he quips.

Field names, markers and plaques at the complex pay tribute to the many people who helped with

Fislar spent most of the summer at the fields, said Cox.

Bill Rumpf used his business to secure a personal loan for construction.

The “Dirty Dozen” + 3

JoAnne Beilke
Don Blevins
Roy Ebel
Mike Gaynor
Mike Hilfiker
Dave Johnson
Bob Newton
Gary Witmer

Bob Bevens
Ray Cox
Del Fislar
Gary Gogle
Larry Horn
Rick Kuehn
Bill Rumpf

Rick Kuehn secured a permit to use state property.
Field naming honors

Presidents
Don Cox
North Salem Kiwanis
Keizer Rotary
Altos
JB Sod
Reimann
Spec Pipe
National Guard

Dream park, cont’d

A sign at the entrance greets visitors with the message “Please say Thank you to Bob Newton and Ray Cox.”

Nine of the ten fields are named for those who helped, including one for Rumpf, as president.

Another is named for Cox’s late father.

At the time the field names were being selected the board decided one should be named for Salem Sand and Gravel, a firm that had donated heavily to the field work. When Ray’s father, Don, passed away about the same time the Salem Sand and Gravel people suggested the field be named in his honor, for the work his son had done on the project.

There are North Salem Kiwanis and Keizer Rotary fields, thanks to large cash donations from those clubs.

Altos Field recognizes donations from that company, and J.B. Sod Field was named because the firm donated all of the seed for the complex.

A large land donation to the league was made by the Reimann family and one of the fields recognizes that gift.

Jerry Bull of Spec Pipe gave the league some $6,000 in pipe for irrigation, thus a field was named for him.

The National Guard Field is the ninth field. All of the grading was done by guard members.

There is no field named for the volunteers, for the many thousands of hours of blisters and sweat that parents put into the park to make it happen. Their reward comes from the sounds of youngsters cracking the bat, cheering their teammates and laughing by the hundreds, over something as simple as catching a ball.
Opening Day - congratulations, Bob
First time
US Representative Denny Smith pays tribute
Oregon Representative Peter Courtney cuts the ribbon
Opening day, oh what a day!!

Bill, Bob and Ray
Keizer Little League Field
Official Ribbon
April 25, 1981
Opening Day Ceremonies
First pitch
THIS IS KEIZER!

WALK HERE, PLAY HERE,
ENJOY YOURSELF HERE

Please Say Thankyou to:

BOB NEWTON & RAY COX

THAT THE FIELDS ARE HERE

1980/81/82 KEIZER LITTLE LEAGUE. Board of Directors

Thanks, Bob and Ray
Bob Newton left this earth way too early in a surfing accident; he will be remembered always.
We lost Ray, too, to a heart attack; we miss him a lot.
After initial construction, Clint Holland contributed thousands of hours to make the complex the best it could be.
A very special year for KLL
Major boys won District 7
Field #10 came the next year.
One of the prettiest around
Our tools were pretty basic back then
Volunteers move a field

It took a lot of volunteers to move a baseball diamond just fifty feet Memorial Day weekend, a move necessitated by the impending Parkway project. Ray and Bev Cox tried their best to remember all who helped, and said they still came up about 20 short. Among those who spent the three days working on the field were Mike Gaynor, Bob Newton, Don Wiley, Rick and Ricky Keuhn, Del Fissler, Steve Free, Jim Payne, Chuck Riggens, Bill and Billy Rumpf, Roger, Rick and Keith Carter, Bill Bowmen, Jerry and Tracey Gregg, Ray, Bev and Derrick Cox, Gregg Lentz, the Winkler family, Jerry Patterson, Jim Way, Ed Martin, Mark Dirks, Larry Tumbelston, George Self, Don Blevins, Hal Brumstead, Jim and Barb Rice, Alice Beach, Larry Peters, Larry Hall, Ed Query, Roy Ebel, Dick Isaak, Mike Hilfiker, Don Grosnicker, Jim Hershbach, Julian Ruiz, Duane Hoffstede, Bill Logan, Larry Hayes, Pete Winning, Billy Hakes, Dennis Rice, Billy Gallenkon, Hal Lowry and Gene Pingery. Whew!

What do you mean, we have to move a field?
We built it before – we can certainly move it!

and in one weekend
The complex continued to be a source of community pride
The stars continued to align – The City of Keizer was incorporated just in time to buy the property when it was declared state surplus.
Legitimate $365,000 community resource

Ed Davis
President
Keizer Little League

Ed,

As per your request, I have prepared an estimate of what it would have cost to have a contractor build the improvements at the Ridge Drive Complex. If a government agency would have let a contract for this work a contractor would have bid around $375,000.00 as you can see from the itemized estimate as shown below.

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SUB TOTAL $317,500.00

ENGINEERING % SURVEYING 15%

TOTAL $365,125.00

If you have any questions I'll be glad to answer them.

Thank you,

Ray E. Cox
Professional Engineer
City Council takes action in 1985, including Councilor Bob Newton
Keizer gets a real deal
Big, varied show of support for park purchase

That was quite a show of support at the City Council meeting Monday for purchase of the park land on Ridge Drive.

The community recognized a true bargain, 21 acres with a total value over $500,000 for about $100,000. And then we can pay for it with federal dollars.

There was variety evident in the 100 plus attending the meeting, they were not all from Little League even though they may have been reminded of the event by league members. It was nice to see some senior citizens speak up in favor of the park purchase.

I had heard for the past few weeks how seniors would oppose the purchase of more park land. It seemed somehow to make all area seniors sound selfish. If it benefits kids and not seniors then they’re not interested.

Same people keep telling me how seniors vote against all the school measures. But the measures pass, with high senior turnouts.

Certainly some seniors, among others, were opposed to the purchase. But not enough to bother to write a letter or appear at the meeting.

I suspect the senior citizen has, and spends, more time looking at local issues. They have a lot to do with the strong support our Keizer youngsters receive.

It’s time to put to sleep the stories that seniors don’t support youth.

Back to the park land, the city did a fine job in planning, negotiating, contracting with Little League...in handling the purchase of the park land.

Ray Cox wins the “best speaker” of the night prize with a well thought out presentation about the quality of improvements to the park and views as a parent and citizen of the community. He received a round of applause from the audience, concluding that the city of “pride, spirit and volunteerism” could not ignore such a massive volunteer effort by the citizenry.

Those who have never been out to the Little League fields are in for a surprise.

It is a tremendous complex, terraced, fenced, beautiful. Not just a bit of bare land with backstops. Children are playing out there.

The community really came out for the “$500,000 for $100,000 deal”
The final piece of this incredible puzzle falls into place.
December 15, 1987

Dear Boardmember,

I hope this letter finds you and your family healthy, happy and enjoying the holidays. As you know when Christmas comes, planning for Little League is not far behind.

We have had a lot to be proud of in Keizer Little League in 1987. We had six district championships and new dugouts, fences and field work made the fields look great. It was the first time in many years we have ended the season with a positive bank balance. We are completely out of debt.

The 1988 season promises to be every bit as challenging and exciting. I know with the talented people we have on the board, it will be another great year in Keizer Little League. I have enclosed a proposed 1988 schedule. Please take time to look it over and we will discuss any changes at our first meeting on January 6.

Thank you for your past years of service and I look forward to your help in the coming year.

Merry Christmas and 

Sincerely,

Dave
President, Keizer Lit
Like Disneyland, the work goes on.
The next generation getting involved
Ray was always there
Bev Cox inspects the new pump house
Marv Nisley movin’ dirt
Dave Bauer introducing the fieldhouse concept to league parents
Improvising concrete forms – it worked!
Looking back, especially at the special 1980’s decade

Over 1,000 kids playing
1,000 spectators each evening
250 volunteers
$65,000 annual budget
All money raised via concessions & fundraisers

1977-1989
30 District 7 Championships
7 State Championships
1 Northwest Divisional Championship
1987 State 2nd Place

This group of girls played for State Championships four times, twice for KLL and twice for McNary (1-3)
KLL graduates win State Championship for McNary, 1989
Most successful KLL team

3rd Place, 1991 Major Softball World Series
Celebrating this 1991 team
Yet another opening day
Fields are ready, let’s make this place look nice
What are these guys up to?
We’ve always been proud to fly Old Glory
One of those special times that makes all the work worthwhile
Mike Gaynor and Clint Holland, two of KLL’s stalwarts
A peaceful day at “the fields” – we hope that will continue