

KeizerOpinion

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Too many chiefs

It's now less than six months until the scheduled build day for the proposed large playground at Keizer Rapids Park and only half of the expected funds have been raised. Members of the task force overseeing the project are all optimistic that the project will be completed as scheduled. We'll see.

There are too many chiefs involved in the project and not nearly enough fundraising warriors. The time may have passed for large corporate donations—many corporations and organizations budget in the fourth quarter for the following year. Such commitments should have been secured last year.

Fundraising slowed in the final months of 2014. Some members of the Community Build Task Force say that fundraising was halted while the park's master plan was updated. Also cited was the wait for the project's website to be up and running. Both of those are pretty poor excuses.

It is hard to fathom that a large corporation's community department would not donate money until it knew *exactly* where the toy was going to be situated. A company (or an organization) buys into the spirit of a project that benefits a community and its kids regardless if it is in this area or that area of the park.

Waiting for the website to be up and running (which took much longer than necessary, which suggests a lack of oversight) is fine for seeking local donations but it was unnecessary for large, corporate donations. If

the task force and its fundraising arm is relying on local families and local businesses to bear the brunt of the needed funds, they are facing some stiff competition: the turf project at McNary High School and any number of school and sports fundraisers this winter and spring.

The big money should have been secured a long time ago. The task force depended too much on a state parks grant that did not come through, forcing the city to use most of its remaining parks system development charge fund.

If the needed money is not raised by time the build starts, the planners may have to eat crow and downsize the entire project. Thousands of Keizer school kids were excited when project designers came to their schools last year and asked for ideas; a packed presentation at the civic center was testament to the community's support. Little has been heard in the community about the project, no consistent promotion or marketing. Some people may think the project has gone away.

Civic projects work only if there are foot soldiers to carry out the duties. There are too many chiefs wanting their name attached to this community project; the playground project needs fewer chiefs and more people with the right connections to solicit big donations.

Even if the project is downsized due to money issues, the kids of Keizer will still be happy there is a playground. —LAZ

Al and Anne Rasmus

It doesn't go too far to say that the Keizer Heritage Center may now exist without the hands of Al and Anne Rasmus.

The Rasmuses were honored by the center's board of directors at a reception held last week.

The couple was instrumental in the campaign (along with others including Jim Hupy and Les Zaitz) to save, move and renovate the old Keizer School building into what it is today: home for the Keizer Community Library, the Keizer Art Association and its Enid Joy Mount Gallery and the Keizer Heritage Museum.

Once the building was refinished the hard work of operating and maintaining the building began. Al Rasmus put his experience to work to create a business plan which included establishing a sinking fund for the decades-old building, devising rents for the

non-profit tenants and day to day operations. With his sober view Al oversaw every aspect of the building.

Because of his diligence, the Keizer Heritage Center stands as a beacon of our city's history. Sixteen years ago some advocated putting a match to the old, beat up building. Cooler heads prevailed.

Anne Rasmus has had no less of an impact on the building. She served as event coordinator for many years, hosting any number of weddings, parties and meetings. She personally worked to assure the landscaped grounds kept looking pristine.

The two have stepped back from their volunteer duties with the Keizer Heritage Center, but Al remains on the board of directors which will benefit from his financial expertise for the foreseeable future. And that's a good thing. —LAZ

Keizer council meetings

To the Editor:

The other night I attended a recognition dinner at the Keizer Community Center to acknowledge the work of our past mayor and two councilmen.

I agreed with the positive statements that were directed at the retirees. One presentation was also directed at the new council. I may be completely wrong but the way I interpreted his clever presentation was that the council should not pay too much attention to a small group of citizens who voice objections and concerns about council actions. Their concerns or objections are of not much value because the silent majority of Keizerites agrees with the council decisions.

Much to Keizer's benefit, there are always volunteers who will step up and support the council but they may not necessarily be the majority. The truth is most Keizerites could care less as to what occurs at a council meeting except when it comes to increases in taxes or fees. For example, most citizens of Keizer do not care how much of a buffer zone there is between Keizer Rapids Park and property owners that border the park. Most citizens could care less about zone changes that affect other peoples' property values just as long as it does not affect their property values. I would have preferred the presenter to say the new council should try to mitigate problems and concerns as much as possible and to attend council hearings with open minds. I realize council members spend a lot of time studying issues but they are not always right in their decisions.

I admire our new mayor who has been trying to find out what our citizens want in the future. I wish her well.

Bill Quinn

Keizer

A tea for the library

To the Editor:

After water, tea is the most consumed beverage in the world. Drinking tea represents a ritual as much as a beverage—the brewing, the sipping and a relaxed approach that is generally associated with tea time. As much as the tea itself, if the process of brewing, pouring and taking the time to relax and enjoy.

Tea is best served in a cup and saucer, when you can sit, enjoy the brew and relax.

So, come and relax at the Keizer Community Library's Tea Time for the Library on Sunday, Feb. 1 at 1:30 p.m.

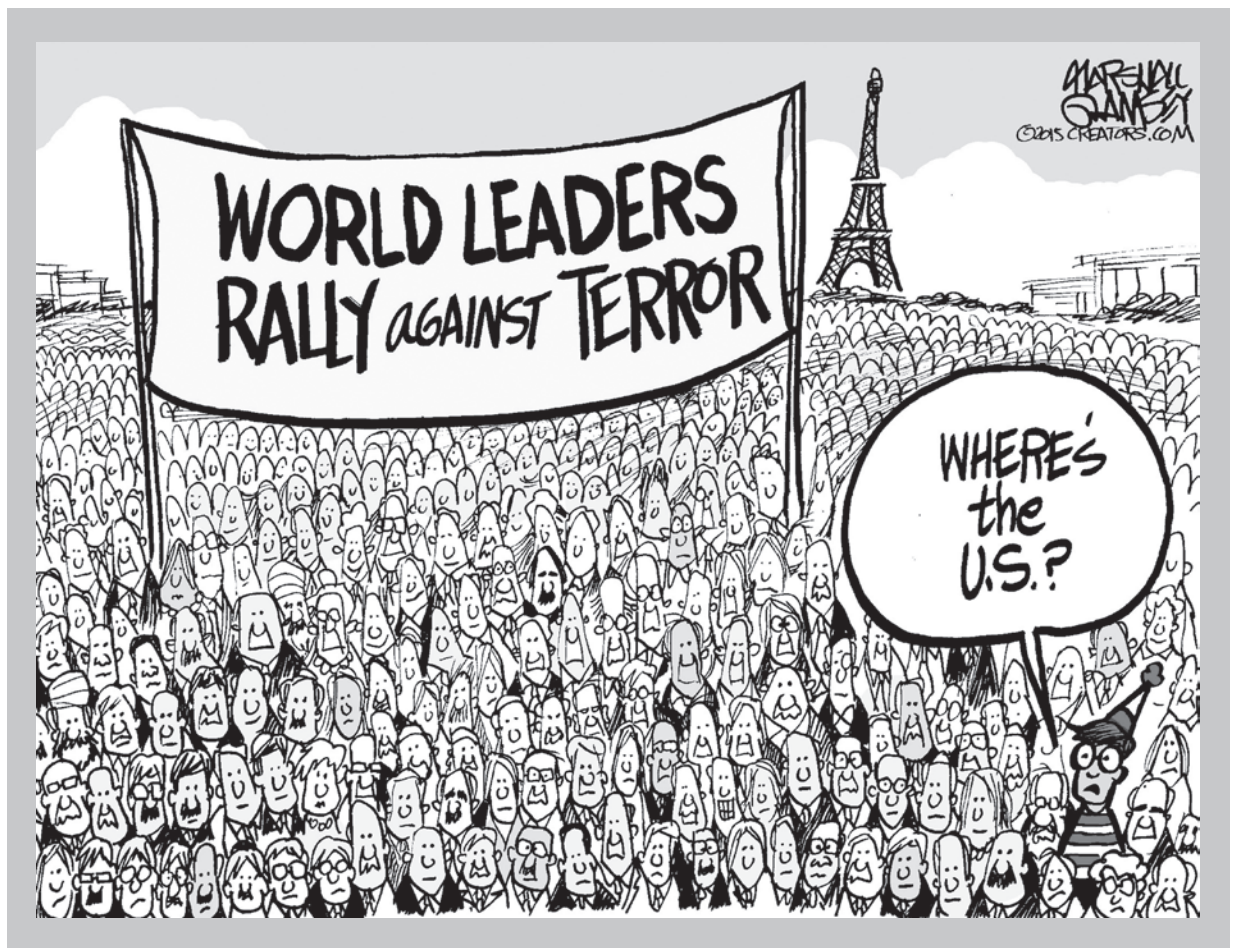
Aside from tea the menu will feature scones with clotted cream and jam, traditional tea sandwiches and delicious desserts catered by Keizer's own Elegant Catering.

Dana McCarty and Andi Bean of The Bonfire Bettys will provide light entertainment.

I encourage attendees to wear their gloves and hats; there will be an exhibit of vintage handbags, gloves and hats on loan from Kathe Leigh Mash.

Tickets to the tea are \$25 and will support the library's operations and programs.

Gayle McMurria-Bachik
Keizer



Obama can't wish terrorism away

By MICHAEL GERSON

President Obama's 2011 State of the Union address is remembered today mainly for this bit of rhetorical irony: "America must move off a permanent war footing."

It was the triumph of speechwriting over experience. Obama's pledge came about three weeks after the fall of Fallujah to the Islamic State. By June, Mosul would be overrun. Global jihadism now has a cause—Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's sham caliphate—around which to rally. It controls unprecedented territory and resources. It has a stream of thousands of Western recruits cycling in and out of the Middle East. And it encompasses a dangerous competition between the Islamic State and al-Qaeda, in which acts of terrorism are a source of street credibility.

Obama's reaction, as always, has been restrained. The world does much to disappoint him, but it apparently has nothing to teach him. Every signal he has recently sent—in his lack of an appropriate symbolic reaction to the Paris attacks, in his limp, equivocal performance beside a more determined Prime Minister David Cameron—seems to be saying: I am not going to repeat George W. Bush's overreaction to terrorism, which only feeds extremism.

So, Obama is careful to explain that terrorism is not "an existential threat." "Intelligence and military force alone," he says, "is not going to solve this problem." And he urges Europeans to "not simply respond with a hammer."

We have come a long way when an American president pompously urges the French to curb their cowboy instincts.

But the situation in Europe reveals this line of argument—that overreac-

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tion provokes terrorism—to be farcical. The French did not support the Iraq War. They did not engage in enhanced interrogation. They have been consistent supporters of the Palestinian cause. They have tried not to offend. But it didn't matter. Some offense by Charles Martel in the eighth century would have been sufficient pretext. Western countries are not engaged in policy disagreements with violent Islamism. They are facing, in Cameron's words, a "fanatical death cult."

Obama is correct to distinguish that cult from the faith of Islam. Equating the two is not only substantively wrong, it is strategically insane. No president would criticize the religious beliefs of millions of his fellow citizens—particularly when their good faith is necessary to isolate violent radicalism. And any fight against terrorism depends on good relations with Muslim allies who take many of the front-line risks. Islam is not the same as Islamism. And not even all Islamism is violent Islamism. Such distinctions are essential to successfully conduct a war on terrorism.

And Obama is correct that this war requires a variety of non-military strategies: diplomacy that somehow corrals Sunni and Shiite powers into anti-terror alliances; economic development that provides opportunities for alienated youth; effective ideological campaigns (which are now badly underfunded) to counter violent extremism. We do need "all the elements of our national power."

But even with these caveats, the

task that remains is a global armed conflict of uncertain duration. It will involve maintaining a technological edge to monitor the communications of potential terrorists. It will involve arming, training and guiding (sometimes with American boots on the ground) proxies to fight battles. It will involve targeted killings with drones, bombers and special operations forces.

Particularly with the rise of the Islamic State during the last year— which occurred in a vacuum of local sovereignty and global attention— America has an enormously complex and difficult task ahead. It involves building up allies that have previously proved hollow and fragile; patiently reclaiming territory; preventing infiltration by jihadist veterans and attacks by homegrown sympathizers; helping re-establish some semblance of legitimate government in Iraq (challenging) and in Syria (pretty near impossible).

It is not sufficient to describe this, or dismiss this, as "counterterrorism." Even the effort that Obama currently describes requires the end of a terrorist regime holding large portions of two countries in the Middle East. Americans need to be prepared for years of conflict—and for the strong possibility of terrorist escalations such as we saw in Paris. Or worse. And American allies need to be led and encouraged in this effort, not ignored or lectured.

President Obama has variously tried to declare victory against terrorism ("al-Qaeda's core leadership has been decimated") or to claim that America has turned a corner past war. But his wishes do not make it so. Displaying his own core of leadership—if only to justify his stated strategy of regime elimination—has never been more needed.

(Washington Post Writers Group)

The old God vs. 'This is all there is' debate

By MATT CHAPPELL

Throughout the ages the argument as to whether there is a God or not has always been foolishness, something which has to be broken down into its various parts and endlessly analyzed.

But the God of the Bible has always had the special significance of being considered by some to be a fairy tale, which makes it unique in that it is considered too good to be true. Yet, among all the god's of history the story goes, this would be The God, and to say that God is not a personal being is to ignore the presupposition that we were created by Him within the context of our relationships.

Either there is a God or there is not, no one can see God and live, but what can we deduce scientifically from the arguments of those who choose not to acknowledge Him?

First of all we would commonly agree that with the increase in knowledge comes an awareness of how little we really know, and that within the context of our future development that it would not be wise to limit ourselves, especially considering the possibility that we are an inferior being whose past, some claim, is that of a pond scum compared to what is really our ultimate destiny. It would be highly ignorant to dismiss the possibility that 7 billion humans might be equal to only one of what might be many that exist in the universe.

Apparently we've been able to narrow the beginning of the universe down to enough matter to fit on the head of a pin, if men have been

able to split the atom which creates destruction, why could there not have been a controlled experiment which set

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off the universe which unequivocally is full of design (multi-universes)? Perhaps God had access to a cloud which contained all the knowledge in the universe and He created everything through a 3-D replicator, if it makes it easier to believe?

But one thing humans can agree on is that the sum of our knowledge might be intolerable to those whose higher state creates scorn for those who think they are something and are not. We call that God. Even a minority who might truly believe in God have the right frame of thinking which is conducive to respecting higher forms of intelligence. We call

that humility.

But to say there is no God is foolishness, and there is greater foolishness in trying to prove Him in the first place. Real intelligence must be taken by faith, because that's the only way it works.

Believing in God is essential to stepping out into the unknown with the assurance that God is who we believe He is, either a god of destruction or a God of justice and love, but how else could the universe be held together except by faithfulness....otherwise how could we adapt to a vastly different environment?

It is within man to fear those things which he cannot understand, we call that life, but it is within the heart that accepts things for how they are which we call living. In the end, the only way to truly live our lives is by faith.

(Matt Chappell lives in Keizer.)



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