

## Love transcends societal rules

By ERIC A. HOWALD

Joanie spent most of the day I met her on the couch where I had just started work as a vocational care provider for developmentally disabled adults.

Joanie was in her 60s, her face pruned by time and caving in around her eyes and gums. She was mostly non-verbal, and needed assistance walking. I don't know if an enunciated word ever passed through her lips. She made keening noises when she wanted attention. Without warning, she would begin to cry.

For the previous three years, my job was providing independent living care for the same adult population in Eugene, but anyone who has done so will tell you the burn-out rate is staggering. Whatever barriers you are told to put in place crumble under the weight of simple human interactions, like trying to explain to a client why they pay rent for six months and, one day, the light bulb ignites with a brilliance that's humbling. You get attached. When I left the house I helped supervise after two years, I sat in the driveway and bawled for 15 minutes.

Upon my arrival in Portland — my wife's employer transferred her to the Rose City — I was determined not to go back to in-home care. But, I was open to vocational work. I would only have clients for eight hours a day and send them back to their in-home care. As my co-workers gave me some background on the various clients I would see throughout the day, Joanie was the one that concerned me most. I was told that when she likes a person, she would take their hand and try to "bite" them. It was actually more of a gumming.

From that day forth, I made it a point to spend a certain portion of my day sitting next to Joanie, talking about the weather, life, and whatever I thought might be on her mind. Eventually, we began taking drives around the metro area just to get us out of the warehouse that was our work site. On one of those drives, she reached across the console of my Pathfinder and took my hand in hers.

For as long as I can remember, I've been drawn to the developmentally disabled population. It was never motivated by pity. It might have been a desire to understand the world better and show them that there were people who valued them. It might have been my cousin who struggled with more mild versions of the clients I was caring for. It might have been my own diagnosis with epilepsy and knowing that, not so long ago, people with my condition were thrown into hospitals or closets while their families did their best to forget them.

However, when I think back on those days, I realize now that the influence looming largest was that of my adoptive grandparents Peggy and Bill Berry. They adopted a baby

moments  
of  
lucidity

girl in 1962. Six months later, they discovered she would likely suffer from moderate developmental disabilities for

the rest of her life. They were given the option of giving her back to the adoption agency and members of their family pressured them to do so. It was too much to ask, it would be too hard. Peggy and Bill never gave in to the "rules" imposed by social mores of the time. In later years, Peggy would say she dreamt of a child before going to the adoption agency. At the agency, the baby placed in her arms was identical to the one in her dream. Katrina was meant for her.

After my biological grandmother's death, Peggy asked me if she and Bill could be my grandparents, too. Hearts find a way to fill their holes.

I met Katrina long before my "adoption." She was a buoyant spitfire who could overwhelm you with questions that she wouldn't give you time to answer before moving on to the next one. The answers, I don't believe, mattered. What mattered was that you listened. The one time Peggy and Bill tried to place her in group home, Peggy only made it around the block before returning and taking her back home. Katrina lived with her parents her entire life. Her mind was perpetually stuck in the questioning world somewhere between 5 and 10 years old, but she knew what it meant to love and more what it meant to be loved unconditionally.

After a long period of deteriorating health, we lost Peggy last year. Last week, Katrina passed in the chair her mother had occupied. It wasn't a place she'd occupied frequently since Peggy's death. Grandpa Bill is now my last living grandparent, and loved all the more for it.

But, for Bill, and Peggy, too, what I feel for them goes beyond love. The only word I have for it is respect. Respect for standing by a daughter whose struggles were insurmountable. Respect for the strength they showed in ways small and large for 53 years. Respect for withstanding the slow burn of life and finding joy even in its challenges.

All of my family members in developmentally disabled care — I refuse to call them "clients" from this moment forward — taught me about the Peggy and Bill's bottomless well of resilience and how we learn to love despite the obstacles in our paths.

When Joanie brought my hand up to her mouth that day, I let her "bite" me. When anyone offers us unconditional love, we are fools to reject it. Rules be damned.

(Eric A. Howald is Associate Editor of the *Keizertimes*.)



## The subversive FBI director

By E.J. DIONNE JR.

In the days of the civil rights movement, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover was focused not on the quest for justice but on his fear of Communists.

In *Parting the Waters*, the first volume of his magisterial biography of Martin Luther King Jr., Taylor Branch tells of a 1956 Eisenhower administration meeting during which Hoover "expressed no sympathy for civil rights and painted an alarming picture of subversive elements among the integrationists."

As an example, Hoover informed the Cabinet that Chicago Mayor Richard Daley—the patriarch who became a bane of the left—had come close to publicly criticizing President Eisenhower for not taking stronger action after the lynching of 14-year-old Emmett Till in Mississippi.

"I hasten to say that Mayor Daley is not a Communist," Hoover said, "but pressures engineered by the Communists were brought to bear upon him."

The absurdity that he felt it necessary to recite the words "Mayor Daley is not a Communist" tells us what we need to know about Hoover's frame of mind.

Last Thursday's speech by FBI Director James Comey at Georgetown University was remarkable on its own terms, but revolutionary in the context of his agency's history. You wonder if Hoover would have accused Comey of subversive intent.

"All of us in law enforcement must be honest enough to acknowledge that much of our history is not pretty," Comey said. "At many points in American history, law enforcement enforced the status quo, a status quo that was often brutally unfair to dis-

avored groups."

He explained why he keeps on his desk a copy of Attorney General Robert Kennedy's approval of Hoover's request to wiretap Dr. King: "The entire application is five sentences long, it is without fact or substance, and is predicated on the naked assertion that there is 'Communist influence in the racial situation.'" He calls agents' attention to the document, he said, "to ensure that we remember our mistakes and that we learn from them."

And who would think an FBI director would cite "Everyone's a Little Bit Racist," a song from the Broadway hit *Avenue Q*? His point: "Many people in our white-majority culture have unconscious racial biases and react differently to a white face than a black face."

Yet Comey was unabashedly pro-cop. He fondly recalled his grandfather, William J. Comey, who rose to head the Yonkers, New York, police department. "Law enforcement is not the root cause of problems in our hardest-hit neighborhoods," the FBI director said. "Police officers—people of enormous courage and integrity, in the main—are in those neighborhoods, risking their lives, to protect folks from offenders who are the product of problems that will not be solved by body cameras."

Comey wasn't just giving a let's-respect-each-other speech. He argued that the problems of race, racism and injustice go deeper than policing. His two most concrete suggestions were a call for "more and better data related to those we arrest, those we

confront for breaking the law and jeopardizing public safety, and those who confront us," and support for President Obama's "My Brother's Keeper" initiative.

He urged attention to the "the disproportionate challenges faced by young men of color," noting that "the percentage of young men not working or not enrolled in school is nearly twice as high for blacks as it is for whites." The goal should be to "grow drug-resistant and violence-resistant kids."

Let's face it: If Obama or Attorney General Eric Holder had given the same speech (and they've said many of these things), the response would have been political and in some cases nasty. This only underscores why it was essential for the words to come from a white director of the FBI.

Was Comey trying to shift some of the heat away from police and toward society as a whole? No, because he was clear on law enforcement's need to examine and reform itself. But yes, he was trying to concentrate our energies on the root causes of crime, and good for him.

It's worth remembering that liberals were once attacked for being "root causers" trying to downplay the problem of criminality itself. But maybe it takes a cop's grandson to prod us to act on both the problem of racism and the economic, sociological and familial challenges faced by young African-American men.

In this sense, Comey really is a subversive. He's trying to subvert and thus transform a debate that leads us into ideological cul-de-sacs. He must stay at it.

(Washington Post Writers Group)

## Monied college sports need reforms

The line between college and professional football appear to have become more and more blurred with each passing season. Just the other day, for example, the media announced that one Vernon Adams, who has been a star quarterback with Eastern Washington University and could play there this fall in his senior year, has switched schools to play at the University of Oregon. His move adds up to money considerations and that's what professional football's all about.

Last week during national signing day, the UO reported 22 signees for the 2015-16 football season. These signees will be granted the same if not greater financial-aid through lavish scholarships from the university similar to what's promised Adams and will receive cost-free tuition, the benefit of free tutoring with classroom assignments, use of one of the finest workout facilities in the United States, no-cost transportation, meals and accommodations at away UO football games and other secret free stuff and privileges unknown to non-athletic students. Again, it's money, money and more money.

Incidentally, among the UO signees, with those lavishly attractive scholarships, is not one single Oregon high school player. Instead, the anticipated roster of 22 includes nine from California, three from Washington state, three from Hawaii, two from Georgia, and one from other states, numbering among the big-time winners for a free college education and possible NFL draft status if they perform on the gridiron as hoped. OSU football has announced one Oregon signee.

Meanwhile, coach Mark Helfrich is the only one associated with the UO

gene h.  
mcintyre

football program who's actually from the state: he hails from Coos Bay. Helfrich is believed to be the highest paid among Oregon's public employees. He recently signed a five-year contract extension where he will receive \$3,500,000 a year plus other perks, an amount, incidentally, close to \$3 million more than the UO president who administers the entire university.

It would seem that some measures of reform are in order, that Oregonians would rise up as one to protest what's happened to state scholarship money as the composition of Oregon's public college football teams is foreign-built. Were authority granted to Oregonians to bring change to our big state schools wouldn't the following take place:

1. Separate the football programs from any participation by the team players in classes or campus activities during the football season because the team players are now professional athletes. They are paid through means that attempt to disguise their non-amateur status by which money is thrown at them to provide them a free ride. Since they are essentially professional athletes, let them enroll for classes and work on their college degrees throughout the reminder of the academic year but not during fall term. Further, chances are greater they'd receive a real college education that way.

2. Winning has always meant a great deal but nowadays it's become the only value with little or no sportsmanship or character-building taking place as

can be seen by law-breaking incidents among the players. Hence, let the support of school football programs be totally self-sufficient. Thereby, no more student assessment fees, regular students serving football players as tutors, and the use of state taxpayer money to quietly fund this and that football-related matter at OSU and UO.

3. Let coach salaries come only from game proceeds and alumni giving. Since football at the state schools is no longer an amateur sport, keep the coaches out of PERS as they now only skew the numbers by their ridiculously high salaries so that those who find fault with PERS use them as examples to attack, as profligate, all PERS retirees.

It is hoped that the next president of UO will make a real and sustained effort to bring about a balance there between sports programs and academic pursuits. That he or she will embrace the mission established in UO's 1876 founding to make certain that those who come to learn enjoy and gain the most from their years on campus. That Oregon's public university in Eugene be governed by the trustees and UO president and less so by the deep pockets of wealthy alumni who favor a sports win, win, win mentality while not much of anything else for which a university has been dedicated to stand for and serve is a consideration to them.

(Gene H. McIntyre's column appears weekly in the *Keizertimes*.)

Share your opinion.  
Send a letter to the editor.  
Deadline for submissions  
is noon each Tuesday.  
E-mail to:  
publisher@keizertimes.com



# Keizertimes

Wheatland Publishing Corp. • 142 Chemawa Road N. • Keizer, Oregon 97303  
phone: 503.390.1051 • web: www.keizertimes.com • email: kt@keizertimes.com



**NEWS EDITOR**  
Craig Murphy  
editor@keizertimes.com

**ASSOCIATE EDITOR**  
Eric A. Howald  
news@keizertimes.com

**ADVERTISING**  
Paula Moseley  
advertising@keizertimes.com

**PRODUCTION MANAGER**  
Andrew Jackson  
graphics@keizertimes.com

**BUSINESS MANAGER**  
Laurie Painter  
billing@keizertimes.com

**LEGAL NOTICES**  
legals@keizertimes.com

**SUBSCRIPTIONS**  
One year: \$25 in Marion County,  
\$33 outside Marion County,  
\$45 outside Oregon

**PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY**  
Publication No: USPS 679-430

**POSTMASTER**  
Send address changes to:

Keizertimes Circulation  
142 Chemawa Road N.  
Keizer, OR 97303

Periodical postage paid at  
Salem, Oregon

facebook

facebook.com/keizertimes

twitter

twitter.com/keizertimes