

KeizerOpinion

KEIZERTIMES.COM

Note from the publisher

This issue of the *Keizertimes* is being mailed for free to more than 11,000 non-subscribing Keizer households. We want you to see what your local newspaper is covering and why it matters.

Businesses are eager to reach the Keizer market and that's why you see so many ads in this issue, which is atypical of a regular week's edition.

We ask you to look and read through this issue. If you like what you see, we are offering a subscription special on page B10 for new subscribers.

Top news stories are available on our website at keizertimes.com but many items found in the printed edition are not available online.

If you have a comment about anything in this issue contact the publisher, Lyndon Zaitz, at 503-390-1051 or send him an e-mail at publisher@keizertimes.com.

It's the people

While parts of the world seem to be losing their heads and spinning out of control, Keizer keeps its cool and continues on a modest path. We're a community that celebrates our kids we roll up our sleeves when our schools and organizations need help.

The continuing crisis caused by the Islamic State in Syria and Iraqi is troubling, but it is far away. What goes on with Congress between the two parties and with the Obama Administration is maddening but that too is far away. When national and international events are out of our control we hunker down and concentrate on our local neighborhoods.

That is certainly in evidence here in Keizer in winter 2015.

Keizer schools have been and will hold a variety of fundraisers from the Whiteaker Middle School Cabaret that raised money for that school's choir programs and travel expenses.

Clear Lake Elementary held its annual auction recently to raise funds for an asphalt athletic track for students as well as local neighbors who utilize it for their fitness routines.

Earlier this month the McNary High School Fine Arts fundraising event, Knight of Arts, sold out and raised close to \$40,000 for the arts at the school including a closed-camera system for the Ken Collins Auditorium.

The Keizer Parks Foundation held its annual Pinot for the Parks

editorial

wine event last week, as well. The foundation's mission is to raise funds for the city's 19 parks. The money raised at the Pinot event is earmarked for the big playground project at Keizer Rapids Park.

The McNary Athletic Boosters Club is finalizing fund raising for artificial turf at the high school's Flesher Field.

It is not only money that Keizer gives to community projects and schools. It also gives time and muscle.

The big playground community build project will take place over five days in June. There are about 2,000 shifts available for the community to work. Community members will dig, wheelbarrow, nail, paint, cater and more during what promises to be the biggest single community volunteer event ever.

About 40 volunteers toiled on a blustery day to clean up the landscaping at Keizer Civic Center.

The Keizer Chamber of Commerce will seek hundreds of volunteers to help set up and operate the Keizer Iris Festival in May.

Keizer residents take pride in their community and it is proven every time a dollar is donated or an hour is volunteered. We remain focused on working for the good of the community.

Keizer is experiencing no violent protests, no chanting of racist slurs, no shootings. We can feel positive about our community but we must always be mindful that not everyone in the world has it so good.

—LAZ



GOP should be equal partner

a box of soap

It is hard to know what a Republican stands for these days. With a newly won Congressional majority the only unifying theme in bills they have introduced seems to be "How can we harm Obama?" It hasn't helped them much so far.

Each time they defer to the more extreme Tea Party bloc they get embarrassed. The attempt to link destruction of President Obama's immigration actions with Department of Homeland Security funding went down in flames. Now they are dealing with an ill-considered letter to the leaders of Iran signed by 47 Senators. Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark, barely more than two months in the Senate, composed a letter to Iran's leaders warning them that any agreement restraining development of nuclear weapons might be thrown out by the next President.

Senator Cotton is on record believing that only a military solution will be effective. He also revealed an incomplete understanding of Constitutional law and geographical uncertainty about which country might include Tehran. The real surprise is that senior Republican senators hitched their wagons to this very green star. They have elevated a young senator who got some percentage of Arkansas' votes to the same footing as our President. It makes them seem uninged by their hatred for Obama.

This act diminishes America. In

showing contempt for President Obama and Iran they also show contempt for China, France,

Germany, Russia and United Kingdom, all of whom believe that the current leaders of Iran are more open to negotiation than previous rulers.

The Logan Act of 1798, too long to be quoted here, names penalties for citizens claiming without authority to represent the United States in foreign affairs. Outside of that these senators have condemned an agreement that hasn't even been made yet. Would they have foreign nations believe that they should from this point forward deal directly with the dissenting side of the Senate?

As the only office voted on by all Americans, presidents have always represented the nation in foreign affairs. Ninety-four percent of pacts with other nations have been executive agreements. Just about all those agreements have been honored by succeeding presidents.

Born in a small eastern Washington town to Goldwater Republicans, I am genetically pre-disposed to be a Republican. There don't seem to be any modern Republicans that I recognize. Efforts at fiscal restraint should include corporate welfare and

tax fairness, and even the Department of Defense. Conservation used to be something that Republicans championed.

We live in Keizer. Oregon Republicans are now searching for a course that might return them to equal partnership in Oregon government. The party is fractious enough right now that they were not even able to plan from one conference. The Dorchester Conference was considered ideologically impure by more conservative Republicans who organized the "freedom rally." A party divided portends more trouble ahead.

With a base of only about a quarter of registered Oregon voters Republicans must attract voters both Democrat and non-affiliated. Stump speeches about "failed Democratic policies" won't be enough. Stump speeches delivered from a position of moral superiority and moral certainty won't attract much support. Though I am of an age that longs for return to a remembered and possibly imaginary purity we are in a different America.

So, Republicans, give us something we can support. Assume that we understand today's problems and say what you would do to make Oregon better.

(Don Vowell gets on his soapbox regularly in the *Keizertimes*.)

Paper is balanced

To the Editor:

Regarding Jim Keller's view (Letter to the Editor, March 13) about liberal bias on the part of the *Keizertimes*, I note in the same paper, approximately 24 column inches devoted to supporting Keller's conservative views (Michael Gerson)

letters

and 15 column inches reflecting what would appear to a liberal view (Gene McIntyre). The bias, if there is one, seems to be the other way (like Fox News?)

Art Burr
Keizer

The *Keizertimes* welcomes all points of view. Send a letter to the editor (300 words) to the *Keizertimes*. Deadline for submissions is noon each Tuesday. E-mail to: publisher@keizertimes.com

Promise of kicker refund isn't so certain

Some good news for Oregon's beleaguered middle class and those whose incomes are even lower: Oregon's Office of Economic Analysis has announced that there will be a re-awakening of the kicker law to the tune of \$349 million. Of course, as always when the government hints of a break for taxpayers, this may be a false alarm if revenue ends up coming in short of the prediction.

Whatever the case, it means that we must wait until the current budget cycle ends at midnight on June 30 to find out whether our tax burden has been lightened. Possibly, divine intervention must occur to make it happen; however, if it does, it will mean a 5.1 percent rebate on an Oregon taxpayer's liability in taxes to the state in 2014, figured after deductions were computed to determine the amount owed.

Among the 50 states, Oregon's the only one with a "two percent kicker" law, requiring the entire surplus to be returned to the taxpayers if actual tax collections are greater than two percent of what was predicted when the two-year budget cycle began. Should your head spin a bit in trying to sink your teeth into how this is done, be aware that this money will not, as has been the practice in past years, be delivered by way of a special check sent to each taxpayer. Rather, your 5.1 percent "refund" will be realized by you when you file by April 15, 2016, your taxes for 2015. Yes, Oregon government wants to use your money as long as it can, even if it belongs to you on July 1, 2015.

I considered myself to have been a rather silly fellow. I thought that if we generously gave up the state's kicker law on individual returns we could help Oregon's social programs and schools to improve their benefits to all citizens in need and students at every level, pre-K through graduate school. I laugh now at how simple-minded and misled I was by way of viewing that the kicker would be used to meet public needs.

gene h. mcintyre

What changed my mind about the kicker are the examples of where huge taxpayer dollar amounts have been wasted

Education Investment Board and staff.

- University sports costs versus quality university education.
- The Kitzhaber timber advisor's taxpayer-paid cash cow.

I'm confident a number of Oregonians could add to the list of examples provided here. Yet, nothing or next to nothing is ever done to make those of us who pay our taxes feel better about what happens to the money we're forced to give the state every year. Those responsible for corrupt practices should be held accountable. Yet, as it all festers and putrefies, nothing is done to correct, weed out or punish the wayward guilty.

I will believe the state is honest about the math used to calculate the kicker and what I am owed back when my tax debt for 2014 is duly reduced. The governor's office under Kitzhaber, his girlfriend and their alleged accomplices have led me to further disillusionments from where trust in government doing the right thing in Oregon can no longer be taken for granted.

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



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