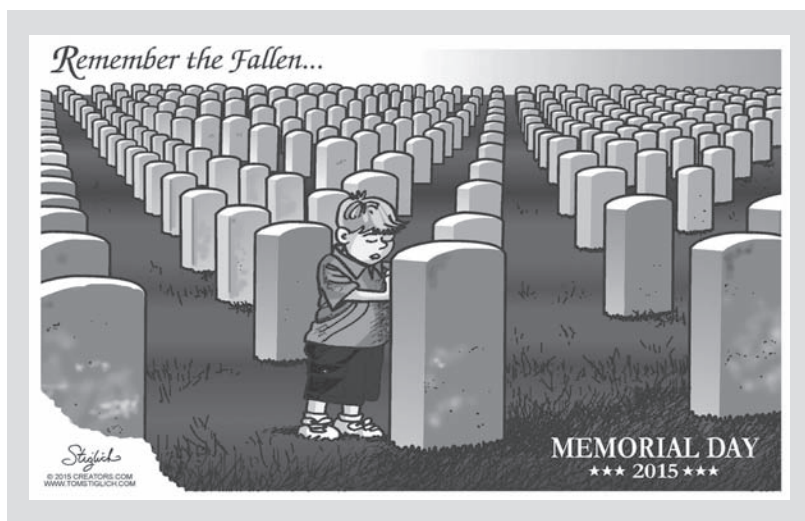


# KeizerOpinion

KEIZERTIMES.COM



## K-9 program gets festival boost

To the Editor:

Copper Creek Mercantile hosted the 2015 Crown the Hound event with the Iris Festival.

Raffle tickets were sold and \$2,500 of the proceeds was donated to the Keizer Police Department's K-9 program.

We thank the following retailers for selling tickets: Creekside Veterinary Clinic, Big Town Hero, The Cotton Patch, Keizer Sub Shop, Uptown Music, R. Bauer Insurance and Town and Country Lanes.

The seven raffle winners received a year's supply of pet food. The winners were: Dawn Thomas, Eileen Taylor, Kim Lucey, Samantha Paxin, Debbie West and Jolene.

We congratulate the winners and thank the above retailers for helping sell tickets that raised money for the K-9 program.

**Dennis Blackman**  
Copper Creek Mercantile  
Keizer

## Chamber responds

To the Editor:

Keizer Chamber of Commerce is a working partnership of its businesses, citizens, government and community volunteers. Simply put, we work as a team to advance and develop jobs and economic good in the Keizer area. To see the headline in the May 15 *Keizertimes* (Chamber request gets no vote), and then to read the selected, bare snippets of on-going discussions between city officials and Chamber leadership, we are obligated to tell a better story.

Conversations on re-directing efforts in economic development started over two years ago. City staff were instructed to present a plan. City Manager Chris Eppley asked the Chamber for help. Could there be a public/private partnership? The Chamber executive director and city development director researched the numerous other partnerships between Chambers and municipalities. As a result, Keizer City Council appointed two Keizer Chamber members (local businesses) to its newly-formed Economic Development Commission (EDC).

In support of the EDC, the Keizer Chamber started engaging with many Keizer businesses about what barriers exist for expansion and how to attract new businesses and tourism to Keizer. We contracted for professional services and initiated Community Conversations with existing businesses, healthcare providers, educators, and construction contractors. Throughout the process, city council leaders and staff were and are involved.

To be clear, the Keizer Chamber of Commerce does not need city funds to operate. Our members and events (Keizer's Iris Festival) support

## letters

our budget and many community activities. The Chamber's request for funds to continue to revitalize small and local businesses, parallels the goals of city government and Keizer's business community. Councilor Dennis Koho's comment at the budget committee presentation is spot on: "I want to see us turn it back around somehow, where the city identifies what we can use the help of the chamber for."

The city's first file cabinet was donated by the Chamber—dba Keizer Merchant Association—and the motto "Pride, Spirit & Volunteerism" came from a merchant who was active in our organization. In fact, merchants of Keizer rallied with others in seven different public votes to form the city government for Keizer. Our working partnership of business, government, and community volunteers really is what the Chamber is all about. Our goal is to help keep Keizer livable and economically strong, and we're doing it. The many years of working together should be celebrated.

**Audrey Butler,**  
Chamber President  
**Christine Dieker,**  
Executive Director

## Gun control is not an extreme view

To the Editor:

I'm tired of being considered an extremist because I support gun control—major gun control. Let me ask you, "Why do we even need guns?"

There was a time when gun ownership made some sense—when people needed them to provide food or protection for themselves and their families or for the common defense. Such needs do not exist today.

It is time to grow up, put away our macho toys and recognize that the ready availability of guns is the problem and not the solution—to anything.

**Art Burr**  
Keizer

## Endorsements for sale?

To the Editor:

I find it very questionable that your newspaper (and I use the word loosely) endorsed Colleen Busch the same day that candidate purchased a half page advertisement. You also withheld an endorsement mailed to your staff on behalf of the other candidate. Did Mr. Stevenson need to take a half page ad to get equal treatment from your publication?

**Richard Stevenson**  
Keizer

# Every opinion supported by web

By DON VOWELL

In the 1950s it was announced that a vaccine had been found effective in preventing poliomyelitis. Parents were relieved and widespread vaccination programs were begun. I remember parading through the Whittier Elementary library with my classmates hoping I wouldn't be the one to break down in tears. Mom and dad trusted government to know best. There is fairly wide belief that this vaccine was responsible for virtually eliminating poliomyelitis, a terrifying disease. Smallpox vaccination was even more effective at wiping out a deadly threat.

If Internet access had been available to my parents in 1955 maybe they'd have seen an article that the Salk vaccine infrequently had serious side effects. Smallpox vaccines also had rare bad effects. Instead, a sense of communal trust and shared responsibility prompted them to have the four of us join all our schoolmates in getting shots. The greater good was served.

Americans trusted their leaders. Through the 1960s a majority trusted their government to do the right thing always or most of the time. That level of trust reached a new low of 13 percent very recently. That corresponds to polling now finding that only 17 percent of respondents believe that corporations/business

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soap

always or most of the time do the right thing. It seems those two bodies are now seen as one.

As recently as a couple of hours ago a Facebook acquaintance posted an article reporting that President Obama knew about the Benghazi attack several weeks before it happened. He is still posting articles claiming at last to show definitive evidence that the president's birth certificate is fake. As an odd aside this post hopefully adds that 20,000 "likes" will start the impeachment process. This friend of mine, a good employee for his whole career and a reliable, faultless family man, most probably has the same hopes as I do for the future of this country our children will share. It scarcely seems possible that we could agree on the leadership necessary to realize those hopes.

We've been suffocated with facts. My Facebook pal believes that Obama/liberals/Democrats are destroying his country. He has no trouble finding a website supplying facts to bolster his belief. I've never asked him how he accounts for the difference in our beliefs, assuming he'd grant that I was, like him, an honest employee and that nothing was more

important to me than my family. Something has made us each believe the other clueless.

Cognitive dissonance—the mental discomfort of facing inconsistency of one's thoughts, beliefs, perceptions, and behaviors. In a result described as backfire, when confronted by facts disproving something you believe it sometimes reinforces that belief. Pictures of the president's birth certificate, and endless bi-partisan Benghazi investigations only serve to show the dark depth of the deception. I won't pretend that I am immune to cognitive dissonance, only that I am not so wed to my beliefs that I am immune to their change.

In looking for writings about why people believe as they do I found an interesting test embedded in an article. Most parents have strong beliefs about spanking. Do you think you would change your beliefs if research shows you to be wrong? In the end you won't have to. Spanking can be effective on children under 7, if used infrequently and in private. Research also shows that positive reinforcement, timeouts, and other strategies work just as well and don't require violence. Choose the facts that fit your personal morality and carry on.

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

# Big Toy will change future of Keizer

By JANET CARLSON & LORE CHRISTOPHER

The Big Toy at Keizer Rapids Park is about building our community and improving our children's health. As a community, we are concerned about childhood obesity that has more than doubled in children and quadrupled in adolescents. The Big Toy at Keizer Rapids Park will make possible healthy, active outdoor play for Keizer's and Marion County's children. This is the right project at the right time to improve the future of our children and families.

Keizer Rapids Parks began with the vision of connecting Keizer and the broader region with the Willamette River. Seventeen federal, state and local partners joined together, creating a 150-acre expanse of natural beauty for residents to enjoy. Opening in 2006, the park features hiking trails, bike paths, a disc golf area, boat ramp, Keizer Rotary Amphitheater, and dog park. At Keizer Rapids Park you can already experience free concerts throughout the summer, RIVERfair, and Shakespeare in the Park. And now, starting June 14, Keizer Rapids Park will proudly launch a destination play area reflecting our region's unique history and culture.

guest  
column

More than 3,400 children from every Keizer elementary school engaged in focus groups where they drew pictures of what they wanted in a Big Toy play area. Landscape architects then took those drawings and spent hours compiling the children's ideas, resulting in a playground design that features Keizer's and Oregon's history. Big Toy components include the Oregon Wallace House log cabin, Smith Rock climbing wall, an eastern Oregon dinosaur dig, Salem-Keizer Volcanoes slide, paddle boat, and Willamette Valley fire trucks with misters. Adaptive play equipment expands the Big Toy's appeal to youth of all abilities and all ages.

The Big Toy at Keizer Rapids Park has strong support from area Rotary clubs, Chambers of Commerce, fire departments, Salem-Keizer Transit, neighborhood associations, and area businesses. We are grateful for financial support from the City of Keizer, Keizer Rotary Club, Marion County, Oregon Community Foundation, Keizer Parks Foundation, and many, many organizations and individuals

who adopted components, bought a fence picket, or simply made a donation.

What we need now is manpower. On June 10 to 14, more than 700 volunteers will build this 15,000 square foot playground. We expect to complete the build in just five days. No skills needed. We have skilled construction captains who will train and oversee each four-hour shift. In addition to construction help, we need volunteers for children's activities, art, and child care. We need help feeding 200 volunteers three meals each day. There is something for everyone to do.

Then join us at the soft opening in the late afternoon of June 14 or at a free concert honoring our volunteers at the Keizer Rotary Amphitheater on June 27. You, your friends, your children, and your grandchildren can enjoy the new Big Toy playground, along with other park amenities, all through the summer. For more information, or to sign up for the community build, visit [www.keizerbigtoy.org](http://www.keizerbigtoy.org).

(Janet Carlson is a Marion County Commissioner; Lore Christopher is a former mayor of Keizer. Carlson can be reached at [jcarlson@co.marion.or.us](mailto:jcarlson@co.marion.or.us) and Christopher at [chrisfam1@msn.com](mailto:chrisfam1@msn.com).)

# Keeping a promise to those with PERS

Some Oregon newspaper writers have contracted 'beat a dead horse' syndrome. Those among this group just cannot give up the effort to find fault for all the state's problems in the retirement benefits earned by former public employees PERS retirees who worked long enough for the state of Oregon to have been vested. What happened to deny those folks extortion rights on PERS retirees was that the Oregon Supreme Court found unconstitutional the "grand bargain" that was legislative action and gubernatorial sign-off on reforms mainly to deny PERS retirees an annual cost-of-living (COLA) at a whole 2 percent.

Some have written a surrender to what was undone by the court. Those newspapers recognize a deal is a deal and former Governor John Kitzhaber and a majority of members of the Oregon Legislature violated that deal. The court's ruling throws a shadow over the second half of the current legislative session that is trying to financially help local governments and school districts and address the now increased cost of PERS contributions that would have realized relief through the reforms.

Other state newspapers were less generous, referring to the court as having "gutted hard-won reforms." For some journalists, the court's 87 page opinion was a "slog," inferring that the court took too long to announce its finding of unconstitutionality. It quoted, as have other newspapers, a deputy executive director of the Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA), Jim Green, who was awarded 'right on' status by these folks when he said, "Retirees did very well. Kids did very poorly."

PERS retirees are viewed by some folks as causing a "crippling burden" on schools and other public

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services. In the end, from their view, all the effort at the Capitol yielded only modest savings (as some reforms will stand but not the denial of the 2 percent COLA) forcing policy makers "to confront the very problem they and their predecessors worked so hard to tackle in 2013."

What is the size and shape of the problem? There's the gap between the system's obligations to retirees and its on-hand assets. The court's decision reads that there's an added cost to the state's 2017-19 budget. There's a projected loss to schools, state and local government because of money that will need to be diverted to cover higher PERS costs.

Really now, there must be other ways to address the shortfall between what the state has promised its retirees and its financial resources. One entertaining feature of the moaning and groaning that's underway now that the court has ruled is what Mr. Green of the Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA) has quipped about retirees doing well while school kids suffer.

The Oregon School Boards Association should clean up its own house since it does nothing about local school boards all over the state, most recently in Portland, but in Salem-Keizer and elsewhere in Oregon, too, that give superintendents and their central office administrators huge salary, double-digit increases that cause raging among taxpayers who must pay these tabs. The OSBA does nothing about these outrages while denouncing 2 percent raises for public retirees. Justice would never arrive for PERS retirees if they were at

the mercy of the OSBA.

Then there's the basic question in this matter. Why is it that Oregon's legislators and former governor find the only answer to financial shortfalls is by going after those who worked for peanuts for years serving Oregon's citizens and must now, by their logic, pay for yearly increases in the cost of schools and all public services? We have a state where the wealthy are given a pass to pay their taxes by minimum tax burdens and can practically write everything off through manipulation of the tax laws. Why not reform the tax laws and make the cost of doing private sector business in Oregon an equitable system of fairness where every taxpayer, including those who've acquired considerable riches, pays according to salary in a progressive rather than regressive taxation system? Now that'd be real reform.

John Tapogna, the president of ECONorthwest, an economic consulting company, was said to "correctly" sum up the court decision by saying, "Oregon made a generational mistake in public policy, and the court has essentially ruled that we have to live with it."

No, Tapogna, you don't have to live with what the court ruled. You can put your head together with other smartypants Oregonians to find solutions other than trying to free ride for your tax relief on the backs of former public employees.

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



## Keizertimes

Wheatland Publishing Corp. • 142 Chemawa Road N. • Keizer, Oregon 97303  
phone: 503.390.1051 • web: [www.keizertimes.com](http://www.keizertimes.com) • email: [kt@keizertimes.com](mailto:kt@keizertimes.com)

**Lyndon A. Zaitz, Editor & Publisher**

### 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

The *Keizertimes* welcomes all points of view.  
E-mail a Letter to the Editor to:  
[publisher@keizertimes.com](mailto:publisher@keizertimes.com)  
by noon each Tuesday