

KeizerOpinion

KEIZERTIMES.COM

Kudos to Caillier

As you read this the big playground project at Keizer Rapids Park will be nearing, or already, completed. You and your children will be able to enjoy all of its elements throughout the summer.

This was truly a community build, thousands of man hours from volunteers is making the vision of William Stitt come to fruition. It does take a village to raise a playground. Thousands of dollars and supplies were donated by civic-minded businesses and individuals. The 15,000-square-foot playground will be another major attraction at the park.

The hundreds of volunteers needed a leader and that is Mark Caillier, the project coordinator. Caillier, a former city councilor, is one of the city's premier volunteers.

It is not a surprise that Caillier took on the coordinator position like a fish to water. His fingerprints are on a lot

of projects around the city.

Caillier had many parts of the playground project to keep track off, especially when the proposed site of the project was relocated within the park. That process delayed the build for nearly a year, but he was able to seamlessly continue with his duties. He led an army of dedicated volunteers but they all looked to him to keep the project in line and on time.

Kudos to Mark Caillier for his major contribution to the playground project. He led the community in assuring the project was built as designed. His name should be permanently placed at the site so the community never forgets the efforts of one of Keizer's top selfless volunteers.

Keizer's kids will have a fun time even if they don't realize what it took to make the playground a reality.

—LAZ



Why is a gun different than a car?

Oregon House Bill 3093, with Rep. Bill Post as chief sponsor, would allow concealed handgun licensees from many other states to legally carry in Oregon. "If you have a driver's license you can drive a 2,000 pound car in any state without anyone blinking an eye. What's the difference between that and a gun?" he asked on Monday from the front page of Oregon's largest daily paper.

The average weight of American cars is now about 4,000 pounds, which makes them different from guns by nearly that heft. Nobody yet has asked for a permit to conceal the presence of their car.

A car is a far more useful servant in daily life than a gun. In today's spread out existence it would be a hardship to buy food, get health care, get to your place of work and even go to visit your family and friends without a car. You can do all of that without using a gun.

A more important difference is that licensed drivers as a group are much more like a well regulated militia than are gun owners. If gun owners were willing to be registered, tested, and insured against possible damages then maybe that concealed carry permit would already be good in all states.

Licensed drivers are also without any well-funded political groups screaming about their natural freedom to drive any vehicle they like without governmental interference. You don't see stories about protesters at the Legislature's doorstep chanting against the requirements of vehicle registration. You must register your VIN. Nor will you find large scale resistance to mandated insurance for all drivers. That's one I've always hated even though I

a box of soap

and be photographed for that license. You must have that license, vehicle registration and proof that you are insured whenever you get in the car to go somewhere. And yet most people, like me, don't feel unduly encumbered by all of that. It is accepted as a reasonable societal means of keeping some order on the streets. You are free to choose any car, truck, motorcycle, RV, or other street legal vehicle you can afford to buy and maintain. They must be street legal because cars are regulated to make sure they are safe enough for their owners and everyone else with whom the roads are shared.

"A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed." Why is the discussion always about the individual right to keep and bear arms and never about what it might take to be a part of an organized and regulated militia? Maybe it is my personal bias that makes me view "they're coming to take our guns!" hysteria as hysteria. Even uncertain about your Constitutional interpretations, I don't want to take away your guns. I just want some independent verification that you are responsible enough to have them.

One last difference between a gun and a car—with the CHL you can carry your gun right into the Capitol building, but you can't drive your car in. I guess nobody thought there was a need.

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

letters

France School event a success

To the Editor:

The France School of Dance would like to thank the community and the students for donating 748 pounds of food and \$343 in donations to the Keizer Community Food Bank.

Our performance/food drive was held May 26 the at North Salem High School.

Linda Martin
Keizer

Failed law cost \$2 billion up north

To the Editor:

A recent letter mentioned Canada spending \$10 million on failed gun laws. In fact, it was over \$2 billion.

The decades-long farce ended in the single greatest defeat for gun control advocates since the invention of gun powder. In an almost unbelievable example of irony anti-gun leader Wendy Cukier has done more than Sam Colt to arm Canadians for the future.

Terry Edwards
Islamorda, FL

The King Dollar/low energy nexus

By LAWRENCE KUDLOW

The strong May jobs report, including a 280,000 jump in nonfarm payrolls, reminds me of the big debate over the harmful effects of a strong dollar and falling oil prices. But where's the harm? King Dollar, along with the supply benefits of the fracking revolution, may actually be propping up a subpar economy facing headwinds from heavy business taxes and overregulation.

The entire cost structure of American business benefits from lower-cost imports and the cheaper purchase price of anything when the dollar is king and energy costs sink.

American firms become more competitive. And consumers benefit from rising real incomes in response to the energy price collapse. And it's not only energy. King Dollar strengthens consumer purchasing power across the board.

This whole wage debate around the Federal Reserve incorrectly focuses only on average hourly earnings, which are up 2.3 percent for the year ending in May. But wait a minute. If you're going to use hourly earnings, you have to add hours worked, which, in the aggregate, are up more than 2.6 percent over the past year. That yields a nearly 5 percent increase in worker wage income.

And because of the disinflationary effects of King Dollar and cheaper energy (the consumer price deflator is flat), the nearly 5 percent gain in worker wages is all real. So consumers have a lot more spending power than most economists believe. Car sales jumped by about 18 million in May. A harbinger of better retail sales?

So don't be led astray by the pessimists. The U.S. economy is absorbing the strong-dollar/low-energy nexus with very little difficulty.

other views

Even in the financial sector, where a number of marginal energy companies issued junk bonds, we haven't seen the negative systemic effects on the banking system that the hedge fund managers predicted. Bank stocks have been rallying of late, including a nearly 3 percent gain last week despite a 1 percent loss in stocks overall.

Now, I don't deny some short-run negative effects from the high-dollar/low-energy play. As crude oil dropped 43 percent and King Dollar increased nearly 20 percent, the economy shed 2,600 jobs from oil and gas extraction and another 38,000 from total energy support services. But this is a tiny fraction of the 3.1 million jobs created over the year.

The dollar-energy pessimists also point to a negative King Dollar effect on exports and multinational profits. There may be some impact here. But let's not forget the recessions in Europe and Japan and a weakening China. So a 2.3 percent increase in real exports is not a bad amount. And when the dollar is worth more, every other export business cost is cheaper.

And yes, there has been a roughly 11 percent loss in international profits. But the story here is that the so-called currency translation effect is an accounting fiction. U.S. dollars are left overseas where they are taxed at a much lower rate than if they were repatriated. (This, of course, is part of the corporate tax problem we have.) Meanwhile, over the past year, core domestic nonfinancial profits from the gross domestic product accounts are up 7.5 percent, and overall pretax

profits are up nearly 4 percent. Not fabulous, but not bad.

And when you look at the macro picture against the backdrop of King Dollar and low energy, it's still subpar, but it's not getting worse. The four-quarter change in real GDP is 2.7 percent. The Standard & Poor's 500 index over the past year is up 8 percent, with the Nasdaq gaining 18 percent. The inflation rate is nil. And jobs are growing at a steady 2 percent pace.

And what happens when Washington policy finally delivers tax and regulatory reform? The King Dollar/low-energy scenario becomes a great economic backdrop. The combination of a strong dollar, light regulation and lower marginal tax rates sets the stage for 4 to 5 percent growth, which will get the U.S. economy back to its long-term trend.

This brings me to an interesting final point. You don't hear much about the dollar on the campaign trail. But Ira Stoll (*FutureOfCapitalism*) and Seth Lipsky (*The New York Sun*) point to a possible Jeb Bush sound dollar, which would be the opposite of the crumbling greenback and skyrocketing gold and energy prices that occurred under his brother's administration.

In a recent TV interview, the former Florida governor said: "You can make a case that in the last few years, given our monetary policy...we've been manipulating our currency. We've never had a time where our central bank is just printing money like nobody's business. And that depreciates our currency."

Well now. Jeb is certainly on the right track. Let's hope the other candidates follow along. For a million reasons, sound money is crucial to economic growth.

(Creators Syndicate)

Will more money create job ready students?

Since the recession has softened, it has been revealed that there is a need for people trained in vocational-technical skills. The number of these jobs is no small potatoes; in fact, they add up to hundreds, even thousands, of opportunities that too often go unfilled by Oregon's working age youth and adults because they are not adequately trained for them.

Oregon's legislators were quick to respond to the need and the reaction comes by way of Senate Bill 81. The bill seeks to greatly increase enrollment in community colleges by high school graduates that would provide a close-to-free tuition for those 12th grade completers who meet certain requirements.

By such a state-sponsored path there would be career-training for those students who didn't consider going to college due to the cost. Career paths could be established for them that would provide a means to obtain better-paying jobs or jobs at all to help those Oregon employers in need of appropriately trained youth and thereby also reduce the often chronic and ongoing costs of social-service programs.

How does that idea relate to the ability of Oregon's community colleges to provide what's needed? Not so good by way of a recent Oregon Secretary of State audit of the state's community colleges. The audit determined that, over a recent seven-year period, starting in the academic year of 2007-2008, merely 24 percent of Oregon community college students completed an associate's degree or certificate, while Oregon's community colleges reach fewer than one-quarter of students in need.

Oregon ranked 32 out of 36 states studied for community college completion. It was found that fewer

gene h. mcintyre

than 24 percent finished as the completion rate was 15 percent for black students, 21 percent for Hispanics, 22 percent for American Indians, 16 percent for Pacific Islanders and 19 percent for multi-racial students.

There are many reasons given for failure to serve Oregon's college age youth and others who seek to improve their employment prospects. The argued barriers by those defending themselves are the dollars available to support Oregon's community colleges that fell sharply during the recession (but have more recently rebounded fairly significantly), those students who do not get adequately steered to federal funds and loans and private sector scholarships, and other failures that may be a grossly inadequate ability by community college organization and design to do the job successfully.

The Salem-Keizer School District is well underway to establishing a costly mini-community college on Portland Road. It's the much heralded Career and Technical Education Center (CTEC) which promises to enable those students who attend it to pick up enough training and knowledge in construction know-how and manufacturing skills (other skill areas, we're told, to come later), enabling them to graduate from high school into "high demand, high paying jobs."

What's profoundly unsettling and maddening is this: When Chemeketa Community College is among the state's community colleges that's having huge difficulties in helping its attendees complete their

courses of study, even start or stay in school, how will the CTEC, with its leadership by former, traditional high school principals, mainly academicians who've not managed much if any vocational-technical programs, turn a corner in effectiveness that has eluded CCC? Further, if the folks behind the founding and building of CTEC know so much as to make a difference not realized at CCC, why didn't they get together in common cause to help those students wanting to obtain secure employment and the chance for a solvent life?

So what is it that motivates the Salem-Keizer School District to duplicate education and training services that could be provided at CCC if coordination efforts were practiced? The answer comes from the importance of Full-Time Equivalence (FTE): That's money from the state that comes to school districts to keep students in school through graduation. One way to keep those inclined to leave school is to establish a CTEC and give them something to do that will interest them enough to stick around to graduate and preserve FTEs. So, what wrong with that? I'd suggest what's wrong is the priority of acquiring money versus service to youth because I do not believe the CTEC can do what it promises it can do: prepare students for walking out of CTEC into a good job, paying a living wage.

Oregon's educators and their cheerleaders tell us over and over again that they need more money. It'd be a most welcome relief in this state if they'd prove they can accomplish their law-given missions in our schools and colleges without ever more money to do it.

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



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