

Cooling stations for Keizer

This summer promises to be a hot season here in the Willamette Valley. We’ve already seen a hotter June than normal and we expect to see high temperatures in the coming months. How are those residents without benefit of air conditioning to fare during 85, 90, 95 or 100 degree days? People who have option of hunkering down in their cooled houses or driving off to the beach or other water playgrounds will do fine. Keizerites who live in houses and apartments without air conditioning will do the best they can. Those who can get to the Keizer Splash Fountain at the civic center can find heat relief there. The city leaders must link up with local churches and Keizer Fire and Marion County Fire Districts to devise a system of cooling stations for summer days that are hotter than normal. The city has a large conference center, the fire district’s fire stations in Keizer also have large spaces. They can be opened to those seeking relief from the heat. It is not enough to just have a cool

space. There would be need for water and perhaps cots for the young and elderly to rest on. Bottled water and cots can be donated by local churches in a mission of community service. Large cities, including Portland, Seattle and many in the Sunbelt, have a history of providing cooling stations during excessive heatwaves. It is second nature to those cities in the southeast and southwest. It is not a habit here in the Pacific Northwest. To protect and serve the public a partnership between governments and the faith community would allow people to face hot weather with less dread. Much like the schedule for Keizer’s Splash Fountain, opening of cooling stations could be triggered by reports of excessive temperatures longer than one day. Some people thrive in very hot weather, some people flag in the same conditions. For those who can’t fend for themselves we should give them relief at very little cost but with a big dividend of an appreciative public. —LAZ

Eight hands, two shovels, one pool

By LYNDON ZAITZ

When the Zaitz family moved from Keizer to the Los Angeles area in early 1973 it moved into a house in Redondo Beach; it had partial views of downtown LA and if you craned your neck just right you could see the ocean.

It sat on a corner in a nice, quiet neighborhood. When dad told the family that the house he and mom bought had a pool, there was cheering around the dining room table. The four of us kids who would make the move had our fingers crossed for weeks hoping we’d hear this exact news.

We were moving to sunny California. And we’d have our own pool. Things couldn’t get any better. And then the other shoe dropped.

With a chuckle dad said the pool was filled. With dirt. Apparently the previous owner enjoyed gardening more than swimming.

The late January morning our family first drove up to our new house all us kids ran to the postage stamp-sized backyard to see our pool. Who could care about our new rooms when there was a pool just steps from the back door?

Dad said from the beginning that if we kids would shovel out all the dirt out of the pool he would have it resurfaced and made operable. He said we could be swimming by June.

Our first task was to rip out all the plants in the pool, then the work really began. We had shovels. We had one wheelbarrow. We started shoveling.

I don’t remember thinking about how much dirt was actually in that pool, it was certainly not Olympic size but you could swim laps in it, not that that’s what us kids wanted to do with the pool.

It became clear quite quickly that we did not have nearly enough space on our corner lot to dump the dirt. We added a lot to the flower beds around the house, but that was only a dozen or so wheelbarrow loads. We started dumping the dirt in a pile at the driveway and stuck in a ‘free dirt’ sign. Of course that sign would come weeks after we started digging out the pool.

We three boys and our sister, Janet,

on my mind

made that project our full time job. After school we’d dig and wheel dirt out to the street. There was no play for us kids on those weekends—it was dig, shovel and wheel. Over and over.

It seemed we were making no progress; we’d dig and dig and didn’t seem to get anywhere. The pool was still filled with dirt.

After many weeks and thousands of loads of dirt we hit the bottom of the pool. Our determination kicked in and we worked harder and longer. We would be swimming by summer, we excitedly told ourselves.

While the pool got emptier, the dirt pile got bigger. Our mountain of dirt attracted attention, a patrol car stopped by one time and said we had to get our dirt pile off the street. Cars and pickups would stop and take as much of the dirt as they wanted.

The final shovelfuls of dirt were excavated. We swept the empty pool, washed it down and waited for the contractors to arrive to sandblast and refinish it; dad built a new facade around the pumphouse. A new pump and filter were installed. The digging and restoring project was done.

Just as we had no idea how much dirt it takes to fill up a swimming pool we had no idea how long it would take for one garden hose to fill it again with water. It was the most torturous week we kids had ever experienced. Each morning we’d awake and run out back to see how much progress the garden hose had made. Slowly, inch by inch, water crept to the top.

The inaugural plunge took place about three months after we first starting digging. All that hard paid off. There was a six foot wall on one side and a detached garage on another, both were perfect places from which to jump into the pool. The Zaitz kids lived in that pool all the summer and successive years.

We worked hard for something we wanted and were rewarded handsomely with the best toy a kid Oregon could have: a pool just steps outside the backdoor.

All it took was four kids and a couple of shovels. (Lyndon Zaitz is editor and publisher of the *Keizertimes*.)



The responsibilities of liberty

By DON VOWELL

A wise editor once advised me not to respond to the inevitable criticisms. Martin Doerfler’s able and concise response to the most recent backlash relieves me of that need.

But since that original piece we’ve had another sickeningly stupid shooting. A young man entered a church and shot nine worshipers dead. So I ask, was it Dylann Roof’s inviolable right to own that murderously efficient weapon?

The founding fathers, noting the need for a well-regulated militia, ended the Second Amendment with “the right to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.” As Doerfler notes, there are a host of restrictions, or infringements, on private ownership of weapons. Of the staggering variety of weapons manufactured within U.S. borders only the tiniest fraction can legally be owned by private citizens.

Would I welcome restrictions to the First Amendment—being tested and vetted before publicly expressing my opinions? In fact nothing of mine has ever made it onto this page without being examined and edited by qualified professional journalists. There are many restrictions on published works, most of which I am aware and glad of. I do not feel restricted.

The main objection to the origi-

a box of soap

nal piece was my failure to separate rights from privileges. If we accept Thomas Jefferson as a Constitutional authority then the self-evident truth is that “all men are created equal, endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.” The Constitution did not “grant” those rights, but was created to protect them.

Privileges come from a great many places outside of government. I had the privilege of shopping at Costco this afternoon because I grudgingly fork over \$55 a year. Tonight I might sit and stare at a television program, a privilege I am granted simply by sending a check to Comcast each month.

Another Jefferson quote was noted in a letter to the editor in today’s *Oregonian*. “I am not an advocate for frequent changes in laws and constitutions, But laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths discovered and manners and opinions change, with the change of circum-

stances, institutions must advance also to keep pace with the times. We might as well require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him when a boy as civilized society to remain ever under the regiment of their barbarous ancestors.” That such a profound mind was joined to such profound humility shows he expected much of us. Thomas Jefferson hoped an informed and responsible citizenry would react to their own times, would grow and govern themselves. He, more than anyone, knew that the Constitution didn’t arrive from the mount, etched onto stone tablets.

I wonder who on the board of the NRA could conjure up any plausible connection between Dylann Roof and a “well-regulated militia.” Any honest discussion of gun rights going forward will have to include what was intended by that phrase’s inclusion in the Second Amendment.

If you can afford a car and meet all requirements necessary for ownership you are free to do it. If you can afford a gun and meet all requirements necessary for ownership you are free to do that. One is a right, one is a privilege—neither seems unalienable, both are subject to restriction. The responsibility is ours. (Don Vowell gets on his soapbox regularly in the *Keizertimes*.)

Can we make education engaging?

gene h. mcintyre

far beyond the teacher and the school.” They remind the reader that students no longer come to school with empty heads ready for teachers to fill while principals hold every kid for robotic obedience in a Full Nelson. Teachers nowadays, they argue, should be guides who help youth to explore their paths of interest and develop their interests and skills.

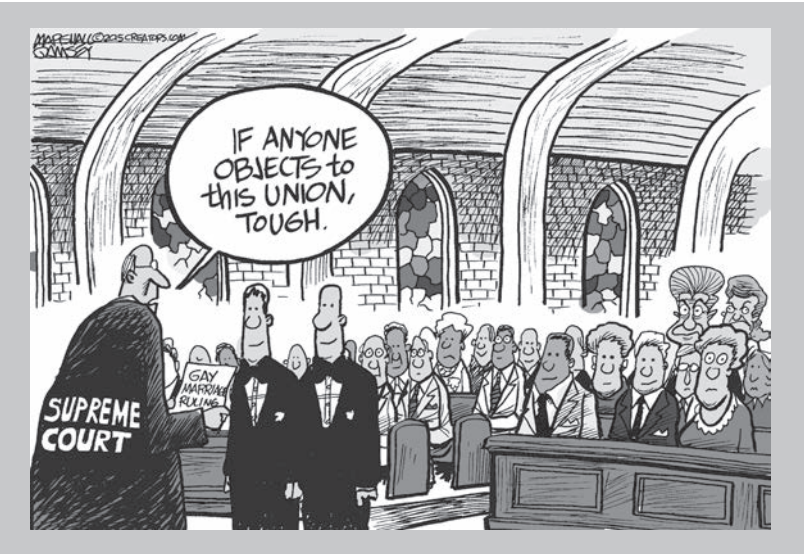
They also borrow a thought or two from John Dewey, yesteryear education leader, when he wisely advised that youth learn best by doing. In the reimagined high school, some will do best in collaborative study, others by individual assistance, some can best develop abroad and then there are other innovative means used in a creative atmosphere.

The reforms that should be underway cannot be expected to come from teachers or, even less likely, school administrators. These folks are more often among the most conservative, tradition-bound Americans. They keep their jobs by doing reasonably well at

what’s always been done while school administrators and their “leaders,” superintendents of schools, are so busy trying to keep a lid on what’s always been done for the coveted FTEs, that they’re afraid to implement a new idea, much less to try different approaches that address modern day challenges.

Badly needed changes will most likely never come from those who keep the torches lit for the “tried and true” which is what I’ve personally observed here in the Salem-Keizer area, where we have a new superintendent who won’t answer emails from district taxpayers. Eventually, under the weight of more and more disillusioned youth and their parents, those who find the high school less and less applicable and relevant, the institution will ultimately crumble from old age and from the internal rot already in advanced form. As long as we continue to hire people to “lead” in our schools who are rigid and fixed in their faith of past practices, nothing will change beyond higher salaries for superintendents who prove their worth by standing firm in hide-bound traditions.

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



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