

# KeizerOpinion

KEIZERTIMES.COM

## Ban smoking in city parks

Smoking in Keizer city parks was a topic at this week's city council meeting. Two citizens asked the council to ban smoking in parks—for quality of life reasons and for fire danger reasons.

The Keizer Parks and Recreation Advisory Board has decided not to advise for a smoking ban in city parks in part because of Constitutional issues. That's political correctness gone all whacky.

Salem, Marion County and the state of Oregon have banned smoking in all their respective parks. Keizer usually fashions ordinances on what surrounding jurisdictions have imposed. It's hard to understand why this particular issue is hard for the Parks Board and the city council to swallow.

At Monday's council meeting several councilors said such a ban ordinance needs to go through the process—meaning public hearings, legal opinions and on and on.

Some Parks Board members are concerned about stepping on the rights of citizens who want to smoke out of doors in our parks. The parks are public spaces. Keizer does not allow smoking in the civic center. Smoking is banned in Oregon restaurants and lounges. A

citizen cannot light up in the state Capitol building. There is enough precedence on this issue that the city council should move forward.

Making public spaces off-limits in parks is just expanding the no smoking rules in place. In a civil society people should get mindful of their surroundings and how their actions are affecting others. Just as some say it is their right to smoke in a park, others would say it is their right not to be subject to second-hand smoke.

The city council needs to step up and ban smoking in all city parks. It is a quality of life issue; it is also a safety issue. With our parks tinder dry due to our hot weather this summer it would take just one unextinguished cigarette butt to cause a devastating fire. While the Keizer Fire District can respond quickly to a report of a wildfire, we are at the mercy of our afternoon winds that whip in off the Willamette River. A small grass fire can quickly explode into an uncontrollable rampage that would threaten homes that surround our parks.

Do the right thing and place a smoking ban on our parks.

—LAZ

## Are we all Cecil?

The killing of a lion in Zimbabwe by an American is a story that won't go away. Outrage was registered on social media. There are those who are baffled by the uproar of the killing of Cecil the lion but not over the deaths of impoverished children around the world, soldiers and others.

Anytime there is a single or mass killing anywhere in the world that is response on social media—some are profound, others not so much.

Should we care about the killing of one lion in Africa by a big game hunter? Absolutely. We should care about the premediated killing of any living being be it human or animal.

According to reports Cecil, who was known to locals for 13 years, was lured out of his protected habitat by guides. The American hunter shot Cecil with an arrow, but that did not kill the lion, who survived for almost two days, most likely suffering. The lion was killed by a gun after the hunter and his guides tracked him down.

Are people upset because Cecil was a lion? An animal? Beautiful? We should be upset because the killing of Cecil reveals once again the hunting and poaching of animals, some of them endangered, or whose populations have declined over the years.

Hunting deer and elk in Amer-

ica doesn't elicit the same universal response; hunting is an ingrained sport. But there are laws that govern hunting regulating when and where it can be done and what is done with the carcasses.

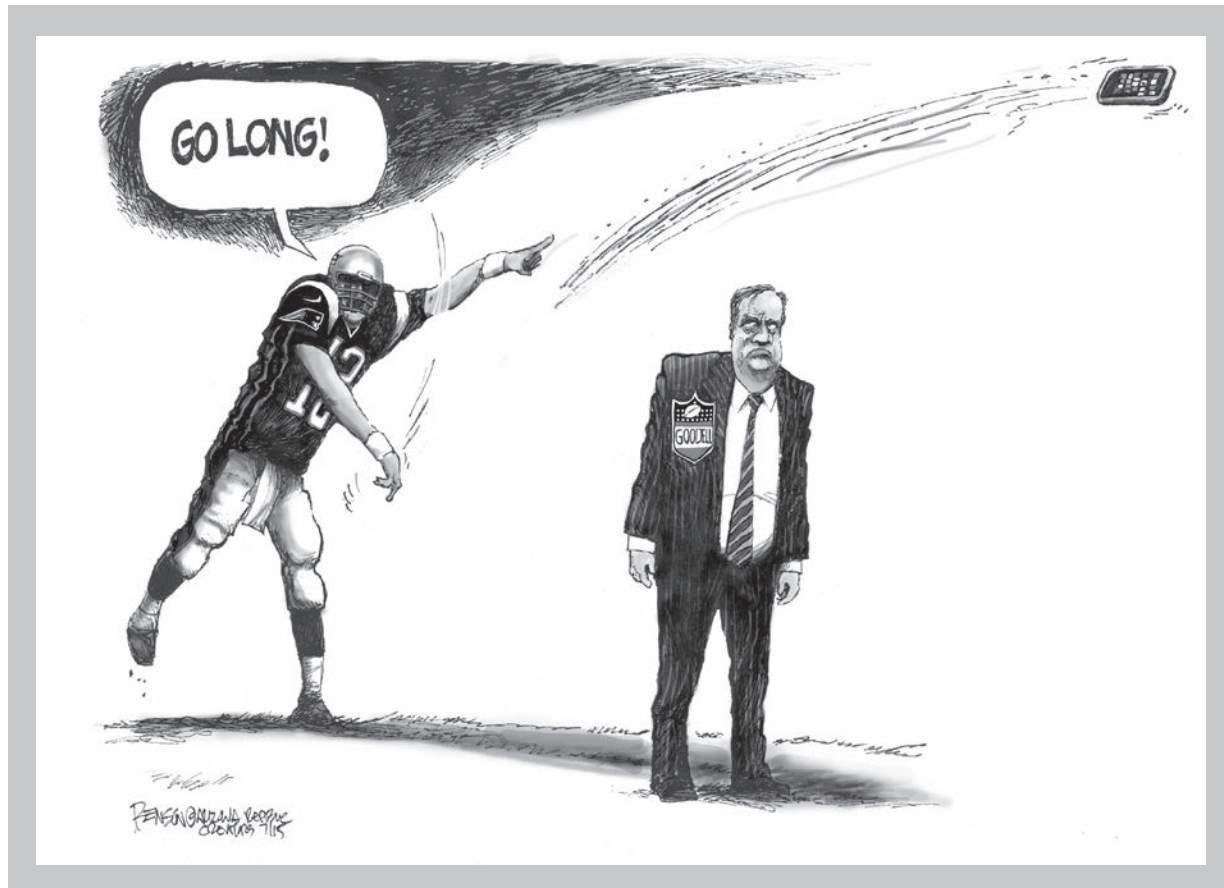
Hunting endangered big game is a whole different story. People get upset when they hear or see the bodies of prey rotting because the hunters retrieved the trophies they were after: head, tusks, hoofs, etc.

It is hard to believe that society would cotton to the idea of cutting down the last tree, or using the last gallon of fresh mountain water. Natural resources are finite and it needs man's protection especially if there is not enough remaining to sustain itself.

Hunting is not bad. Killing endangered or limited species for sport alone and leaving most of the body behind is bad. Too many walls in the world are adorned with the trophies of the desire to be in control of the animal kingdom.

The death of a child, a cop, a mother, an innocent bystander are all tragic and should be marked as such. It doesn't have to come down to man vs. animal; all living beings share this one planet. Man has the power to see that all live the life their creator deemed for them.

—LAZ



## A Trump-led GOP will fail, and deserve it

By MICHAEL GERSON

At this point in the 2016 presidential campaign, the noble, elusive stag of political rhetoric is pretty much road kill.

This judgment is unfair to a few candidates—Rick Perry, Jeb Bush and Marco Rubio come to mind—delivering thoughtful speeches. But in portions of the Republican field, the normal limits of civility have been crossed and recrossed in the relentless search for viral attention. Mike Huckabee compared the sitting president to a Nazi prison camp guard. Ted Cruz accused the Senate majority leader of being a liar. Donald Trump, well, opens his mouth. His opponents are invariably “clowns” and “stupid” and physically ugly. He mocks a war hero and reveals the cellphone number of another candidate.

In the current practice of populism, spontaneous expressions of anger and outrage are considered the most authentic form of communication. Apologies are for wimps. “Doubling down” is the trademarked motto of the 2016 campaign.

American elections have never been a stroll in the park. But attempting to put Trump's hot mess of abuse, pettiness, egotism and bombast in any historical context is difficult. Imagine Abraham Lincoln making fun of Stephen Douglas' height (he was 5-feet-4) and handing out his opponent's private telegraph address.

Trump's success is clarifying about the nature of the populism we are seeing. If he leads the revolt, it has little to do with constitutionalism or limited government. Trump is a recent heretic on nearly every issue important to conservatives, from taxes (raise them on the rich) to immigration

### other views

(Mitt Romney was too harsh) to health care (more liberal than President Obama). Before ambition revised his views,

Trump was far to the left of, say, Jeb Bush, or even Jon Huntsman. So Trump's candidacy can't primarily be about ideological purification.

Trump's appeal is pure style. His emptiness makes him a perfect vehicle for rage. He is angry about everything that makes you angry—because that is why he chose his views. He is a megaphone of resentment against elites and foreigners who are ruining our country, taking our jobs, raping our women or eating our lunch. And he promises to fix it all.

“I don't care what his actual positions are,” says supporter Mark Cuban, owner of the Dallas Mavericks. “I don't care if he says the wrong thing. He says what's on his mind. He gives honest answers rather than prepared answers.”

This is the cult of spontaneity taken to its logical conclusion. In choosing a president, policy positions are held to be irrelevant. Only authenticity matters. And Trump, who has changed his entire political worldview to capture the political moment, represents the brand of authenticity. Whatever his opinions, he delivers a very genuine *Blank You*.

The Trump candidacy has revealed a huge attitudinal division in American life. Some of us have found it appalling that he should gain any traction in presidential politics. It seems as if World Wrestling Entertainment has conducted a hostile takeover of CNN.

But there are plenty of people I know who have a totally different reaction. They are puzzled by my complacency. The ruling elites stood by as Obama transformed America. The Republican Party's feckless leaders could have won the funding showdown. They could have overturned Obamacare. In Trump, we have someone who scares and humiliates the elite, exactly as they deserve.

I'm not sure how a divide this deep can be bridged. But here is what I know:

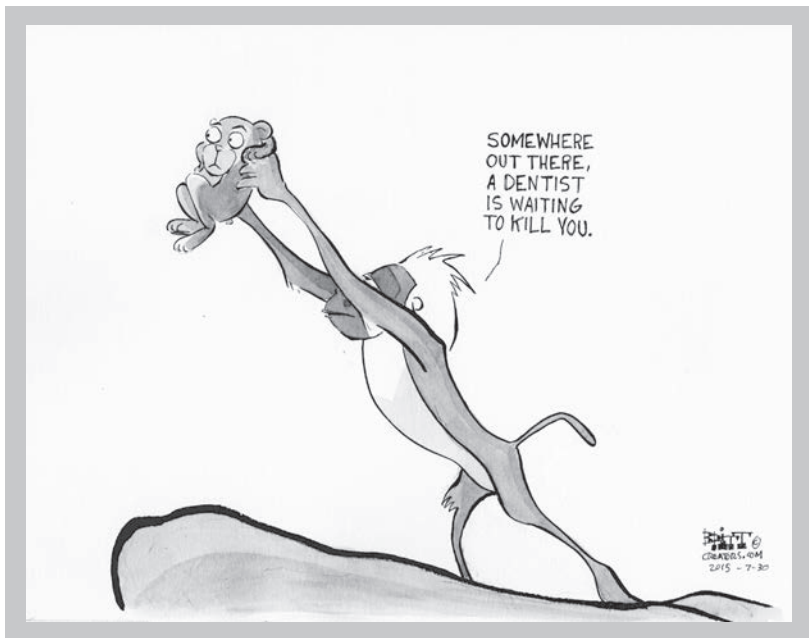
I know that incivility is immoral and dangerous to democracy. People of faith in particular are called to speak and act on the assumption of shared human dignity. This does not rule out vigorous disagreement, but it forbids the cultivation of contempt and the issuing of threats.

I know that Trump is encouraging political fantasies. He is not preparing people for difficult choices, on, say, entitlements; he is assuring them that our problems could be easily solved if elites were not so corrupt. And he is wrong. Our problems are not easy.

And I know that the success of Trump would be the downfall of the GOP. Any party captured by rage and resentment will fail, and deserve it. Republicans should stand for responsible reform, not reckless populism.

During the Revolutionary War, according to historian Ron Chernow, George Washington had two officers review all of his speeches and much of his correspondence to make sure he avoided hasty language and off-the-cuff enthusiasm. The distance from Washington to Trump is not merely change but descent.

(Washington Post Writers Group)



## How many candidates ready to end Medicare?

Who knows, but Jeb Bush is simply following orders from his wealthy benefactors when he announced the other day that the U.S. ought to phase out Medicare. Medicare is the federal program established in 1965 that provides health insurance to Americans once they're 65 years of age and that has and continues to keep senior Americans from the cost of medical services that would surely bankrupt and send them into poverty without it.

While he says that “we need to make sure we fulfill the commitment to people that have already received the benefits, that are receiving the benefits, we need to figure out a way to phase out this program for others and move to a new system that allows them to have something.” Once tinkering with Medicare gets underway, one wonders how long the current recipients would remain harmless while those to reach 65 later would most likely be at the mercy of private insurance companies with a return to the way things were before Medicare: Exorbitantly high premiums with the right of private insurers to withhold coverage for pre-existing conditions and a direct path to an early death for those who cannot pay the price.

The way this could take place is by the rich putting up the big bucks to elect a Jeb Bush—or several other GOP hopefuls—who agree with the end to Medicare. The Koch brothers, Sheldon Adelson and many others have had the limits on campaign spending removed by the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* ruling. Thereby, they can spend any amount necessary to get their man elected, who, due to promises for big campaign chest money will return favors and do what they were asked to do: In

### gene h. mcintyre

this case, place Medicare into terminally ill status.

B u s h , and several other GOP c o n t e n d e r s ,

the nominee selected at the 2016 Republican nominating convention, will argue that major overhauls of Medicare are necessary because of rising spending. However, the latest report on the fiscal health of the program, which Medicare trustees issued in July, did not communicate such a sense of urgency. The trustees report that the part of Medicare that pays for hospital care and related services will remain solvent until 2030 even as more and more retiring Baby Boomers sign up. Further, they predict that Medicare costs will rise more slowly than previously believed. In other words, left alone without the tinkering factor, Medicare will continue to do well for America's seniors.

Another fact on Medicare that has come to light is a new study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) that reports mortality rates among Medicare patients fell 16 percent from 1999 to 2013. Researchers based the study on records from more than 68 million Medicare patients. The improvements are due to hospital and staff effectiveness but also in a major way due to Medicare recipients receiving timely care.

Would a majority of Americans fall for an “overhaul” of Medicare that's really all about burying it so deep in limitations it cannot be found to work for tens of millions of older Americans? Jeb Bush and others of similar thinking apparently do not care as long as the big money interests, the notorious one percent,

can pay fewer taxes or no taxes at all. Meanwhile, Jeb Bush and his family have made billions by their political connections and don't seem to care what happens to those Americans on Main Street. Vote Bush into the presidency, then sit back, without the ability to pay for medical services, and wait for your early call to the Pearly Gates.

Meanwhile, there are candidates among the 17 Republicans declared who have a reputation for looking after the welfare of U.S. citizens. One of those is John Kasich, governor of Ohio and a former member of Congress. Kasich can be tough but he's also fair. In Ohio he has stood by to protect Medicaid, embraced Common Core educational standards and has been willing to consider a pathway to citizenship for illegal immigrants. Further, he has been at least tolerant of same-sex marriage and open-minded on abortion. Experience in government work has included a successful effort to balance the budget as chairman of the House Budget Committee when Bill Clinton was president and can deal with Democrats. Ohio under his leadership has realized recovery from the recession to realize a \$2 billion surplus for Ohio during his tenure as governor there. This guy can get things done for all Americans, including those whose very existence nowadays, the nation's elderly, who depend solely on Medicare and Social Security.

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

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