

KeizerOpinion

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Issue can show city is helping local businesses

In a divided vote at its July meeting the Keizer Public Arts Commission approved the placement of the depiction of a large diamond ring. In front of Sonic restaurant. In south Keizer.

The ring art, created out of metal by the owners of Boucher Jewelers, was initially proposed to be installed in front of the jewelry store near River and Chemawa Roads. Some said that placing it there was inappropriate because it was akin to a sign and would violate the city's sign code. Thus the push to have it installed in front of a restaurant.

This is a wrong decision. The large diamond ring is art, not a sign. Reasonable people can disagree on what it is. The ring doesn't have any writing or logos on it, it's just a big ring that pedestrians and kids will find fanciful and fun—isn't that the goal of public art?

The fact that the art reflects the business it would sit in front of is a good thing that should not be poo-hooped. There are those who object on the grounds that it could open the floodgates of others clamoring to place art in front of their buildings to promote their business. That would be a good thing—if it is executed correctly and within guidelines.

It would not be a bad thing if there was art up and down River Road even

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if it did relate to a specific business. For example, an oversized depiction of a wrench in front of an auto-related store would be whimsical yet be low-key promotion—as long as none of the art had actual text or logos.

Allowing such art would achieve two important goals: more art along Keizer's thoroughfares and economic development. It is key to unhook public art from the city's signage ordinance.

The Keizer Public Arts Commission should have final approval of any art a business wanted to place in front of their building.

It is unlikely that every building along River Road would have art in front. Not every business is keen on art or the expense of creating, installing and maintaining it.

The process for such art pieces should be just as stringent as with the original public art program.

In lieu of banners on utility poles along River Road, decorative and imaginative artwork along the sidewalks would herald to visitors that Keizer is a special place.

The art commission and the city can demonstrate what they are doing for the health of local businesses and economic development overall.

Regarding art in front of a jewelry store? Put a ring on it.

—LAZ

Building a patio, the Keizer way

Keizer did it again. The city and committed volunteers worked together and the result was a new patio space that overlooks the Keizer Rotary Amphitheatre at Keizer Rapids Park.

Park neighbor and community volunteer Jerry Nuttbrock had an idea to add a patio potentially with barbecues and cooking stations. But first things first.

Nuttbrock went before the Keizer Parks and Recreation Advisory Board with a sketched out plan for the patio. The 2,400 square foot patio lays among the trees on the bluff behind the caretaker's resident—known these days as the Charge House after the family that lived in it.

The patio allows plenty of shade which will wonderful during events held on summer's hottest days. The proposed barbecues and cooking

stations will take another round of fund raising and permitting; until then the patio is great addition to Keizer's outdoor theatre.

The parks board allocated \$5,000 as part of their matching grant program. That \$5,000 begat a \$32,000 gem due to volunteer labor and donations from suppliers such as Salem Concrete Service, Salem Mobile Mix and Northwest Rock.

Jerry Nuttbrock deserves kudos for shepherding his vision from paper to fruition.

Presently, unless a party has obtained a permit, public use of the patio is on a first-come, first-served basis. We hope that permitted uses of the patio are limited to allow more people to enjoy.

The patio was completed the Keizer way: one idea, many hands and a bit of money.

—LAZ



Iran thumbs nose at the United States

By MICHAEL GERSON

Since the Iran nuclear deal was announced in mid-July, the world has been treated to an unusual historical spectacle. As President Obama was busy twisting congressional arms to prevent repudiation of the agreement, the Iranian regime has been systematically humiliating him.

Almost immediately, bulldozers began sanitizing the Parchin nuclear complex, where Iran is suspected to have researched the weaponization of nuclear technology—a final taunt to mark the erasure of America's "red line" demand that Iran account for the "possible military dimensions" of its nuclear program. Iran's military and Revolutionary Guard leaders still publicly dispute there will be any inspections of military facilities.

Ten days after the deal was announced, Quds Force commander Qasem Soleimani flew to Moscow (in defiance of a U.N. travel ban) to meet with Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and President Vladimir Putin. In short order, Iranian and Russian military forces began arriving in Syria, apparently to prop up the faltering regime of President Bashar al-Assad. In addition to tanks and drones, the Russians have sent prefabricated housing and mobile air traffic control systems, all the signs of an extended stay.

Several weeks after the deal's announcement, Iran's nuclear chief, Ali Akbar Salehi, revealed that Iran had found unexpectedly generous domestic reserves of uranium, which may come in handy someday. The Iranian military unveiled a new generation of surface-to-surface ballistic missiles. And Iranian leaders continue to deny the legitimacy of all United Nations Security Council restrictions on the

other views

importation of weapons. "We will sell and buy weapons whenever and wherever we deem it necessary," President Hassan Rouhani has

says Michael Doran of the Hudson Institute, "to make sure that the deal appeared, at home and abroad, as the U.S. capitulating to Iran. We made it very easy for him to do that, because we conceded all our red lines and he conceded on none of his. He could depict it as a capitulation, because it was."

Russia's motives are also transparent. Putin enjoys his role as a power broker in the Middle East—the most expansive Russian role in the region since Anwar Sadat threw the Soviets out of Egypt. Putin wants to defend his interests in the region (including a naval base) while strengthening his own proxy (Assad) before any possible Syrian settlement.

But what is Obama's motive in offering mild protests as a new Middle Eastern order, more favorable to Iran and Russia, emerges? The preservation of the nuclear deal is apparently so important that no Iranian provocations should be allowed to upset it. The Obama administration, according to deputy national security adviser Ben Rhodes, believes that implementing the deal is essential "precisely because we have such differences with this government that they cannot be allowed to obtain a nuclear weapon."

In practice, this means that Iran can do whatever it damn well pleases because it knows the Americans are too invested in the deal to blow it up. This may fit Obama's conception of America as a tired nation, overcommitted in the Middle East. But in the process, he is making strategic concessions to Iran and Russia that future presidents may find impossible to accept and difficult to retract.

(Washington Post Writers Group)



Payroll tax

To the Editor:

The West Salem Business Association urges a no vote on the payroll tax that will appear on the November ballot.

The tax would fund weekend bus service, and while the West Salem Business Association supports Salem-Area Mass Transit, we believe the expense should be distributed evenly among the community—not levied solely on the backs of private sector employers.

This measure is unfair because it will only be levied on private sector businesses, with our community's largest employers exempt from paying it, including state, city and county government.

While we understand the potential benefit that this measure has to provide, no tangible data has been shown

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that supports the claim that businesses will benefit if the measure passes.

Finally, this measure has the ability to increase the tax without a vote from the people. In 10 years the rate proposed could nearly double, adding yet another unknown in future hiring and compensation of current and future employees.

This measure is an unfair, under regulated, and unwanted funding mechanism in our community and the West Salem Business Association, consisting of approximately 90 businesses, urges you to stand with us and vote no to stop the employer tax in November.

Terry Kelly
West Salem Business Association

Does an ancient story have resonance?

The Trojan Horse is a tale from ancient times when by sneaky means the Greeks used a giant figure in the shape of a horse to enter the city of Troy and win the day. In the purportedly true version, after a winless 10-year siege, the Greeks constructed a huge wooden horse and hid a small force of men inside it.

The Greeks pretended to sail away. Meanwhile, the Trojans pulled the horse into their city as a victory trophy. After dark that night, Greek warriors crept out of the horse and opened the gates for the whole Greek army to enter Troy. As a result, the Greeks destroyed the city, ending the long war in a victory for them.

Fast forward 3,000 years to the present day and we find that thousands of Middle East people are walking out of war-torn Syria, with additional numbers from Iraq and other places nearby. These persons want a chance to live their lives in a safe environment and constitute the greatest movement of refugees in world history as they make their way in a haphazard, helter-skelter march westward by land and sea. Their destination is the West, mainly Europe because they can get there, hoping they'll be permitted to stay.

Some European nations so far have been less than welcoming while others, including Austria, France, Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the U.S., promising today to accept 10,000, have decided that they will permit refugees in numbers still to be determined. Whatever the case, the numbers here and there change daily, while the dice have been tossed but remain airborne while the dust is far from settled on how all of this will work itself out.

There are a few nations in the region that have already accepted the fleeing refugees. These nations are

gene h. mcintyre

Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, but Arab nations to the south of where warring is underway are alleged to be in foot-dragging

big time. These are Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. They are fearful that the refugees will bring with them all the reasons why they left Syria and other points of origin. However, even these nations seem ready to be more flexible as world opinion on the plight of the refugees heats up.

Meanwhile, ISIS and al-Qaeda (in a feud over which can outdo the other in murdering Americans abroad and at home) have proven themselves cunningly resourceful and brutally crafty at taking the war to their enemies. The radical Islam fighters and their leaders are well known to plot against those who've occupied their lands or used force in an effort to destroy them. Why wouldn't these terrorists plant hundreds of their devoted followers among the refugees, assigning them to bring death and destruction all over the West? We've been warned to be vigilant these days: this state of awareness will become more important than ever with those who are not afraid to die for their "cause," that is, to eradicate infidels and establish a world

caliphate.

There's another consideration also that has to do with persons who've been raised under Shiria law. They have been known to assimilate with extreme difficulty, if they assimilate at all. Nations allowing them to settle are warned to be in for huge social and culture problems that are impossible to resolve with these people because they are totally dedicated to the religious practices they embraced while growing up. We've seen these difficulties in all the nations to which they've already immigrated over the last several years.

From my personal living and working experience in the Middle East, the Muslim sees everything as done or not done by God's will. There are those who've been in the U.S. for some time and respect our laws and Western ways of doing things; yet, there persists a gnawing concern that when they're called to Mohammed's work, as ordered by their Muslim leaders, it will take precedence over anything and everything else, including the lives of their host, the American people.

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



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