

# KeizerOpinion

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## Safety begins at home

The happiest time of the year can quickly turn dark if our home is struck by fire.

During the holidays there is more cooking over the weeks of the season. Holiday decorations often include candles. We may use stand-alone room heaters during the cold nights. Christmas trees may call for extra electrical cords. All of these can be the cause of a fire. And a fire will certainly wreck anyone's holiday.

Our local fire services can respond to an emergency in a matter of minutes, but it is best for homeowners to assure there is no emergency in the first place.

Every home, especially the kitchen, should have at least one fire extinguisher—these are relatively inexpensive and work well when used properly. Of course a fire extinguisher should not be an alternative to calling the local fire district.

Avoiding fires in the home is not

editorial

just a holiday season goal. It should be in the DNA of the whole house and the people who live in it.

Assure that those cooking in the kitchen pay attention to items on and in the stove. There are many stories of kitchen fires that started with an unattended pot on top of the stove.

Outside the kitchen, candles add magic to holiday decorations, but using electric or battery-powered candles is the safer bet. When setting up the tree be sure that all the electrical wires are not frayed and are in good working order. The same holds true for those who use a room heater. Always err on the side of caution: if it looks dicey, get rid of it and invest in new electrical cords.

A little forethought and a little caution will go to a long way to make a safe and happy holiday season. But remember, in an emergency call 9-1-1.

—LAZ

## A new president will deal with ISIL

Reported of late is that 50 fighters join ISIL every day, including an unknown number of Americans. It's surmised that the fighter ranks of ISIL total 30,000. Anyone can do the math to determine how many will be added to the ISIL ranks in a year's time the 50-per-day rate continues, but it's rather doubtful that the number will ever exceed anything like the number of personnel in the military forces of the United States.

Nevertheless, it's been reported many a time that ISIL is mainly doing the horrible things it has done so the U.S. will be provoked into a land war with them throughout Iraq and Syria. It strikes one like me that the lopsided numbers and U.S. weapons of war alone would probably doom the ISIL fighting force. So, why do those maniacs seek land war battles with a U.S. force alone—a force that, with its allies, was able to destroy the indomitable Nazi war machine that formerly had a death-grip on virtually all of Western Europe and some of the U.S.S.R., too?

Well, those ISIL madmen may believe they have Allah on their side and he will take care of those Americans and their coalition friends. Sure, possibly, but our troops have always implored the help of the Lord. So, that factor may be discounted as favoring them over us. Then, too, are they not the same God?

However, the Iraqi army that we spent literally billions of dollars training and arming threw their weapons down and fled the scene when confronted by ISIL fighters. They were Shiite fighters under Iraq's former knothead president who, under U.S. control and with our emphatic demand, had disbanded Saddam Hussein's army of Sunnis who in huge numbers joined the ISIL movement while those who didn't (also trained by Americans) said "No!" when asked to defend their nation from ISIL.

The ISIL forces have taken over a number of Iraqi and Syrian cities and have provided a measure of civil order and city services to the people still living there. Yet, they are harsh custodians and make demands on the inhabitants that are certain over time to give way from the initial acceptance to more and more disillusionments. This could mean that in time the people will rise up and throw out their oppressors. This consequence may occur sooner than later if there is a war between ISIL and a coalition of nations that are,

gene h. mcintyre

like France and the U.K., ready by ISIL atrocities and acts of murder, most recently in the French homeland.

A new president of the U.S. may be much more inclined to use ground troops than President Obama has been, mainly because Obama promised to get us out of foreign wars. However, the warring accomplished by Bush 43, Cheney and their always-ready-to-go-to-war-first cabinet members and GOP hawks resulted in the release of many an Iraqi who had been under Saddam's control as well as his large Sunni army that was disbanded by U.S. demands, that went from where they were in a totalitarian society, such as Iraq was, to make an attempt to establish a new caliphate and force every Arab there and nearby into being governed by it. Now they also want to settle old scores with the U.S. from our taking over their country by arms and drive us by war with ISIL troops to leave the Middle East forever to which they are bid a 'Well, Good Luck!'

We could set up an invasion force in our sometimes-ally and NATO member, Turkey. If permitted to do so, the invasion force could be built up until it resembled in men and machines a quantity of each equal to that which was put together to cross the channel and invade Nazi-held Europe on June 6, 1944. Nevertheless, the U.S. will no doubt sustain casualties as our expeditionary force moves through Iraq and Syria with intent to destroy ISIL. So, whose kids will be sacrificed for a Bush-Cheney mistake? Not their kids, it's certain, as their children have never donned a uniform. Hillary's Chelsea? Trump's offspring? Are you kidding? That brief summary pretty well sums it up as those kids will go this time to be shot up and killed or maimed for life.

I would not want to go myself and would be surprised if any of my friends would want to go or offer up their children. So, do we wait for ISIL to collapse (which would take years to happen) or do we take action now? It's a dilemma that will be predictably faced by deteriorating conditions in the person of our next commander-in-chief and a dilemma I'm sure no one who's sane wants to own, which does not include, in my humble opinion, everyone running now to be president of the United States.

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



## Heroin: an issue that needs light

By CRAIG MURPHY

As we enter into the holiday season, we have been running a *Chasing Dark* series of stories here in the *Keizertimes* about drugs.

Pretty crappy timing, no?

Actually, no.

Brandon Crist was just 22 years old when he overdosed on heroin in late September. His death was a key factor in doing this series. We had been discussing doing some story about drugs, using an excellent piece from August in *Seattle Weekly* by Casey Jaywork titled "The Spike: What Lies Behind the New Heroin Epidemic?" as a starting point. That story can be found here: <http://www.seattleweekly.com/home/960150-129/the-spike-what-lies-behind-the>

We were told there might be someone locally willing to talk about what it's like to be a heroin addict. But that didn't go anywhere until Brandon's tragic death. We were told people in the heroin community were shaken up by Brandon's death and would now be willing to talk. That led to the first story in the series, about heroin addict Spencer and how his family is dealing with his addiction.

Counting this week's story about resources and suggestions, the series has now spanned 10 stories. More could be on the horizon. A new tab will be added to our website with full versions of all the stories, plus any additional stories in the series will be added there in the future.

I want to extend a huge thank you to those willing to share their stories, insights and suggestions. I can't even begin to imagine how tough it must have been for parents to talk about losing their children to drug addictions, both because of the pain involved and because of the stigma that goes with drugs, which

checkered flag

I'll address in a moment.

So what was the intent of the series? Simple: to shed light on the growing problem — yes, it is fair to call this an epidemic — of heroin addiction. Put simply, this crap is killing our youth at an alarming rate. We need to have open, frank discussions about what the drugs does, signs to look for that your child may be addicted and to let families know they are not alone.

Jeff and Hollie Crist never imagined their son would die of a heroin overdose. Even after Brandon became addicted, it seemed like his life was back on track. He was going to be a drug counselor, using his story to share with teens and to warn them what not to do. But then he slipped off track.

Elizabeth Smith didn't even recognize her daughter along River Road after a near-fatal heroin overdose. She never imagined having to find where to send Samantha to get clean. But she fought like hell, learning some awful, dark truths along the way. Now Sam is helping others and Elizabeth was adamant their story be shared.

Sue was frustrated about what happened with Peggy and saw her daughter never hitting rock bottom.

Going back to the stigma: the stereotype out there is drug addicts are from questionable families, often low income. Sometimes that is the case. But in the three examples mentioned above, it's just the opposite.

That's the scary thing — or one of the scariest things — about heroin: it's an addiction that can latch onto anyone, regardless of factors like family

life and economic status.

Let me be blunt for a moment: If you think your child couldn't possibly become an addict because such behavior is somehow beneath you or your family, your head is buried in the sand.

And if you think it's only an isolated problem with some people in town, you're sadly mistaken. This is a problem that extends well beyond the seven square miles of Keizer. It's everywhere.

Elizabeth and Sam would love to have a community meeting to talk about heroin. I would love to see that happen and I hope the meeting draws a standing room-only crowd.

But that should only be one step along the way. We need the topic to stay in the light. We need the story to be shared with friends and family outside of Keizer. We need media organizations in other areas to help by doing stories.

Why? So that other parents don't have to answer that knock on the door, which only confirms the sickening feeling deep in the pit of the mom's stomach.

Why? So that youth like Brandon and Peggy didn't die in vain, and so families that have gone through this hell didn't do it in vain.

Why? So that this growing epidemic can be stopped.

To say this isn't the "right" time to talk about this issue because of the holidays is to say there never is a right time. We can't just push it off and say let's talk about it tomorrow, because there will always be an excuse to push it off. This is a topic that needs to be addressed.

Right now.

After all, for people like Brandon Crist, there are no more tomorrows.

(Craig Murphy is news editor of the *Keizertimes*.)

## Water will be Oregon's #1 issue soon

It is that wonderful time of year when we stop and give thanks for all that we are blessed with as individuals, families, a state and a nation. I am so thankful for my family, my friends and the wonderful people of Keizer, St. Paul and Newberg who make up House District 25. I am honored to serve you.

This past month the Oregon Legislature held one of its quarterly "Legislative Days" where we have committee hearings on topics that may or may not see the light of day in the short 2016 session. There is a lot of talk, both in the Capitol and in news media about possible ballot measures next year or the chance that the Legislature might address the issues behind these ballot measures. There is the talk of raising the minimum wage, a corporate sales tax and a "cap and trade" on carbon fuel. As a conservative, I am opposed to all of these issues and though I'd love to go into detail on the how and why, I don't have the room here but to say: we need to find ways to help every day citizens have better lives without the government intruding. I believe we can address all of these issues in creative yet intelligent ways. I will talk about these issues as we draw nearer to the 2016 session.

One topic that came up in my Rural Communities Committee that is not getting any media attention is water. Without getting into the debate over "man-made climate change" it's very apparent we are in a season of less rain and more importantly, less snow in the mountains. I was made very aware of that fact

from the capitol

By BILL POST



in our committee and the need for action by the Legislature to ensure all Oregonians have a good, steady supply of water, especially in our rural and agricultural areas, of which much of our district is made up of. I strongly believe that water, or lack of water, will be the most important issue that we in Oregon will face in the next 20 years, more impor-

tant than any of the issues I've listed above.

I love hearing from you and always reply whether by e-mail, mail or phone. Please know that I am here to serve you and that I do want to hear from you.

(Bill Post represents House District 25. He can be reached at 503-986-1425 or via email at [billpost@state.or.us](mailto:billpost@state.or.us).)

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