

KeizerOpinion

KEIZERTIMES.COM

Four stars of volunteerism

The closest thing Keizer has to an Oscars-style evening is the annual First Citizen and Awards Banquet staged by the Keizer Chamber of Commerce.

Reipients of the 2015 awards were announced Saturday night and the committee that made the choices got it just right.

Mark Caillier was named Keizer's First Citizen to roaring applause and approval by the audience, comprised of Keizer's volunteer, business, community and civic leaders.

Presenter Lore Christopher (last year's First Citizen) read off a list of Caillier's many accomplishments—his most recent project was as construction coordinator for the Big Toy at Keizer Rapids Park in June. That is just one of the things that make Caillier a true first citizen of Keizer.

If he had been honored for his work on the Big Toy, that would have been enough but Caillier has had a hand in many parts of the city, from his service on various city committees, service on the city council and his volunteer work on the Keizer Community Library and Keizer Art Association's computer needs.

As Christopher said, Caillier is a man who loves his community and is hard pressed to say no when asked for his advice, experience or muscle.

The average resident may be unaware of Caillier's contribution to every facet of the city, but they continue to benefit from his unselfish volunteerism and advocacy over the years and will into the future.

The names of First Citizens winners from the 1960s to today is a list of the city's most devoted residents who never asked "what's in it for me?" They rolled up their sleeves and asked "how can I help?" Caillier is one of the most accomplished honorees ever.

The Chamber of Commerce also bestowed honors on three others Saturday night.

Scott White, owner of Big Town Hero, was named Merchant of the

editorial

Year for his good work for the Chamber and within the community. He is a supporter of athletic programs in Keizer, especially at McNary High School. He has donated store space, his time and food for teams, Chamber events and fund raising efforts by non-profits such as Wake the World, an organization that provides the thrill of water sports to kids. His positive attitude and smile have graced community and Chamber events for years.

Last year's recipient, Joe Egli, presented White with the award. In his speech White recognized the support and help from his family, most of whom have a hand in operating Big Town Hero.

The Service to Education Award was granted to John Honey, former McNary High School principal and current principal of the Career and Technical Education Center in Salem, a public-private venue that adds a technical-vocational element to the education of Salem-Keizer high school juniors and seniors.

Honey was instrumental, along with Mountain West Career Technical Institute and its president Chuck Lee, in developing the school that will prepare students for high-wage, high-skilled careers. Krina and Chuck Lee, the 2014 winner, presented the award to Honey.

Bob Zielinski opened the awards by announcing he was presenting the President's Award to Danielle Bethell. Bethell, president of the McNary Athletic Boosters Club, led the effort to install artificial turf at McNary High School's Flesher Field.

Danielle led projects to add amenities to the Keizer Little League fields. She was also a team leader for the Big Toy project.

Keizer's night of awards and recognition got it right again by honoring Caillier, White, Honey and Bethell. They are an inspiration to those who love their community and work to keep it one of the desirable addresses in Oregon.

—LAZ

Money makes politics crazy

By DON VOWELL

I got a word of the day desk calendar for Christmas and today's word is *kakistocracy*. It is a combination of the Greek *kakistos*, superlative of *kakos*, which means "bad," and the English suffix "-cracy" meaning form of government. *Kakistocracy* literally means government by the worst people. Many of the calendar's words are so obscure I forgot them. I won't forget *kakistocracy*. It explains the emergence of Donald Trump.

The government we have now is dysfunctional enough to make some think that Donald Trump is a viable option. Congress is so paralyzed by ideology, endless fund-raising, and servitude to large donors that it is no longer able to create legislation. Many of us are glad they can't. We crave change so much that "outside" candidates gain support simply by promising change—no need to bother with messy details.

Electing a wild man outsider candidate will not fix things. It is Congress that makes law and Congress that needs fixing. The slate of candidates currently running for president is an example of the same problem crippling Congress. Congress goes about their business seeming to have no regard for the average American citizen. Now we are asked to choose among presidential candidates that average citizens had no voice in selecting.

Donald Trump is the most honest example. He boasts that his qualifications for being president are being rich, consistently leading the polls, and saying offensive stuff with impunity. Period. Hillary Clinton is a candidate because of name familiarity and inevitability. Ted Cruz is a candidate because his ego would accept no less. There is no explanation for Ben Carson's candidacy, and thus it is languishing. Marco Rubio believes that America's greatest danger is a doddering, drooling Fidel Cas-

a box of soap

tro—also he gains points for being young and attractive to the young. Jeb Bush wants your vote because

he is not as crazy as the rest of them. Bernie Sanders would like government to work for the people again. That sounds crazy.

We grew up believing that America is the best place in the world because we all get to take part in government. We all get to vote. It is hard to know how we got to this place—trying to determine which candidate might completely change course without running the ship of state up on the rocks.

My pet theory has not changed in the face of all this. These candidates are chosen and propped up by people with money. We are fed information about them from media sources owned by people with money. Any legislation in the last decade beneficial to average Americans was tacked on to bills benefitting the very wealthy.

The relentless march of America's wealth into the camp of the richest few is a result of legislation rather than billionaires working harder and smarter. Think of a Wall Street sharper that buys a pharmaceutical company then, in the space of a day, raises the price of a 62-year-old medication from \$13.50 to \$750. Are we to admire his cleverness, his hard work? Do we aspire to be like him? Are we worried that the Citizens United decision smoothes the way for people of a similar business ethic to buy and sell legislators and candidates with no financial restriction?

You get what you pay for. What has been paid for is *kakistocracy*. It doesn't work and we should return it. (Don Vowell gets on his soapbox regularly in the *Keizertimes*.)



Buddy, can you spare \$15 an hour?

By DEBRA J. SAUNDERS

Two years ago, Thumbtack—a startup that connects consumers with local contractors—conducted a survey to see what they thought of proposals to raise the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$10.10, as per President Obama's bid "to give America a raise." The survey found that a plurality of the small businesses that used Thumbtack thought a wage hike would be good for the economy. Most thought that a minimum-wage increase would have no effect on their hiring or firing decisions. But what happens if Washington passes Democratic presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders' proposal to more than double the federal minimum wage to \$15 per hour—or Californians pass a ballot measure to raise the state minimum wage to \$15 from \$10?

One piece of news this past weekend suggests a big minimum-wage hike could cost low-skilled workers their jobs.

Wal-Mart closed its Oakland store amid speculation that the city's \$12.55 minimum wage played a role. Oakland City Councilman Larry Reid told *The Chronicle* the city's wage law was a factor in the closure. It's hard to think otherwise when Oakland was one of 269 stores slated to be shuttered across

other views

the country, while in nearby San Leandro, where the \$10 state wage floor prevails, two stores will remain open for business.

The *Washington Post* reported last week that Wal-Mart was withdrawing plans to build two superstores in the nation's capital. A city councilman told the *Post* that behind closed doors Wal-Mart blamed D.C.'s minimum wage rules (currently \$11.50 per hour, but the wage could rise to \$15 if voters pass a ballot measure).

Thumbtack Chief Economist Jon Lieber finds it amazing how the \$10.10 plan blossomed into a \$15 floor, which may make sense in high-cost urban areas, but would put a hard squeeze on employers in places like Laramie, Wyoming. The vast majority of the small businesses surveyed by Thumbtack already pay well above the minimum wage, which is not surprising as many provide professional services. There is one group, however, that the survey found was most likely to be hardest hit—employers who paid more than \$7.25 but less than \$10.10. Wal-Mart falls into that category.

In April, the retail giant raised its nationwide minimum wage to \$9. In October, Wal-Mart announced that the increase in labor costs cut into its profit margin. This month came store closures. Lieber expects to see retailers install more automated checkout machines as the cost of labor rises.

Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf endorsed Oakland's minimum wage, which 82 percent of voters supported. I got no comment from Schaaf, but her office noted that Oakland's unemployment fell from 6.1 percent in February 2015, before the wage hike went into effect in March, to 5.3 percent in September. The Wal-Mart closure, however, means 400 fewer jobs and the loss of revenue from one of the city's top 25 sales-tax producers.

In 2014, former GOP gubernatorial candidate and Silicon Valley entrepreneur Ron Unz worked the conservative case for a higher minimum wage. (Short version: Make work pay more than welfare.) When we talked Tuesday, I asked Unz about Oakland. He told me, "I could see Oakland having possibly made a mistake trying to match San Francisco." Note to Sanders and state unions: Beware what you promise; it could kill entry-level jobs. (Creators Syndicate)

Stop coddling Malheur Wildlife Refuge militia

Any American with a child who wants that child to grow into a responsible, law-abiding adult knows that if the parent gives in to every demand of the child the consequence will be a monster. One does not need a college degree in psychology to figure out the result from a person raised with no boundaries or behavioral limits.

Yet, we see something similar to the indulged child being played out at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Harney County. Somehow the "geniuses" among our FBI leaders believe that if those invaders who have broken the law by taking over and wrecking the refuge will just come to their senses and simply head back home when they tire of their antics. What that adds up to is that from the Bundy incident dealing with federal property in Nevada last year—where there were no consequences—and what looks like an over-patient, indulging FBI "parent" again this time in Oregon, these "spoiled" adults can go about the U.S. countryside and do as they wish with nothing other than an FBI and other state and federal agencies saying, "You're bad boys (and girls) and shouldn't do things like that."

Maybe the mind set of these people is that they can do whatever, wherever, with federal land as long as it's in the middle of nowhere with vague directional intents that have to do mainly with what they call their interpretation of the U.S. Constitution and the will of God. It's not certain they know what they want can come to pass, and we don't either, but it has been made fairly clear by them that ranchers, miners, and others who've not been raised to respect public property, or value land that's given over to protecting threat-

gene h. mcintyre

ened wildlife, can nowadays do with the land as they please.

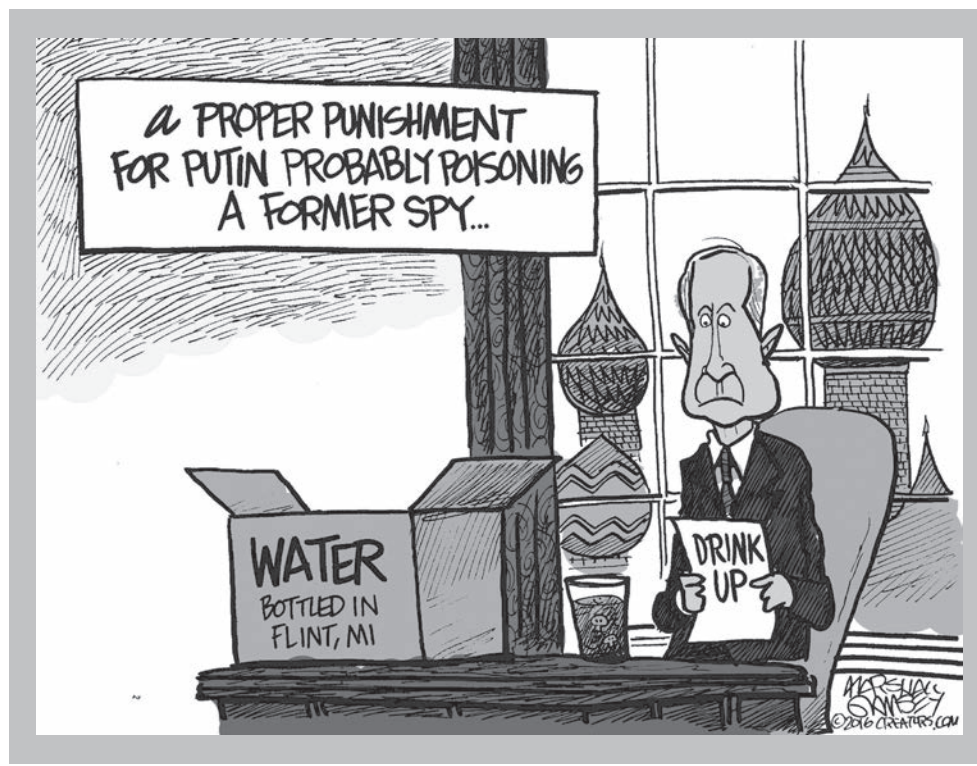
Like any spoiled brat they expect other Americans to send provisions to satisfy their human comforts. They've sent out a list of particulars they want sympathetic people to send them, a list that, when counted, adds up to several dozen items, including shampoo, throw rugs, foot warmers, French vanilla coffee creamers and X-rated materials. Oh, yeah, these people are real warriors while they want their cake and eat it too, just like the tantrum-throwing children we see here and there who've never had any discipline and expect the world to revolve around their needs and wants.

How much are they willing to sacrifice for their fuzzy-headed objectives? Not much it seems as they want free "gravy" but want it on their terms and without cost. If they were anything other than law-breaking brats, not persons who want to be patriots, with intent to protect

America, there are all these wars that so many of our "leaders" have caused all over the world. So, they can abandon the refuge and go to the nearest army recruiting office and sign up. Then, since they are so eager to use their weapons and take "ground" back (that was never theirs in the first place) they can ship out to the Middle East to fight ISSI and al-Qaeda, outfits that are really dedicated to destroying America and burying our Constitution.

Since it appears that our presumed protectors, the FBI and other federal and state law enforcement agencies, will not confront these bandits with overwhelming numbers, that would discourage any kind of OK Corral shoot out, maybe these agencies can buy enough Xanax to pacify these nut cases into climbing back into their gun-racked pickups and head home. If there's enough courage among those who could deliver sedatives to make a statement, tell them that if this happens anywhere inside the U.S. again, force will be used to act on their removal.

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



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