

# KeizerOpinion

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## One potato, two potato

It is shameful that a nation as rich and bountiful as the United States should have a hunger problem. No one, especially children, should go to bed hungry; no one should have to beg for food.

Besides our people, the greatest resource we have is land. The Salem-Keizer School District should begin a program that turns parts of our school property into community food gardens.

At schools, such as Kennedy Elementary and others where too many children depend on free or reduced lunches, it would be better to teach kids where food comes from by growing it themselves. Vegetables grown in gardens at each school would provide nutritious food that is vital to a child's well being. A community garden would also benefit families in need that live near those schools.

The science of growing food is thousands of years old. Man has cultivated what he eats across the globe and across the millennia. It is not rocket science, it is as basic as it gets.

Some might say that we can't force our school children to grow their own lunches. That would be correct. We can provide the tools and supplies for kids and families in need to grow fresh vegetables that are important to their diet.

Such a garden program should be developed with as little bureaucracy as possible. It doesn't need an environmental impact statement. It doesn't need legislative or federal oversight. It just needs to get started.

Starting with each school's business partners, donations can be sought for the implements: timbers

editorial

to create raised garden beds, good soil, seeds, trowels, hoes and water hoses.

No child would be required to be involved, yet what parent would keep their child from learning about food and

agriculture and have fun doing it. The program could be an exciting and rewarding if presented with enthusiasm and a can-do spirit by the school district and community groups such as the Rotary Club of Keizer.

Kids generally don't like vegetables, especially if they are not served at home regularly, but what kid who grows their own carrot or tomato wouldn't savor every bite?

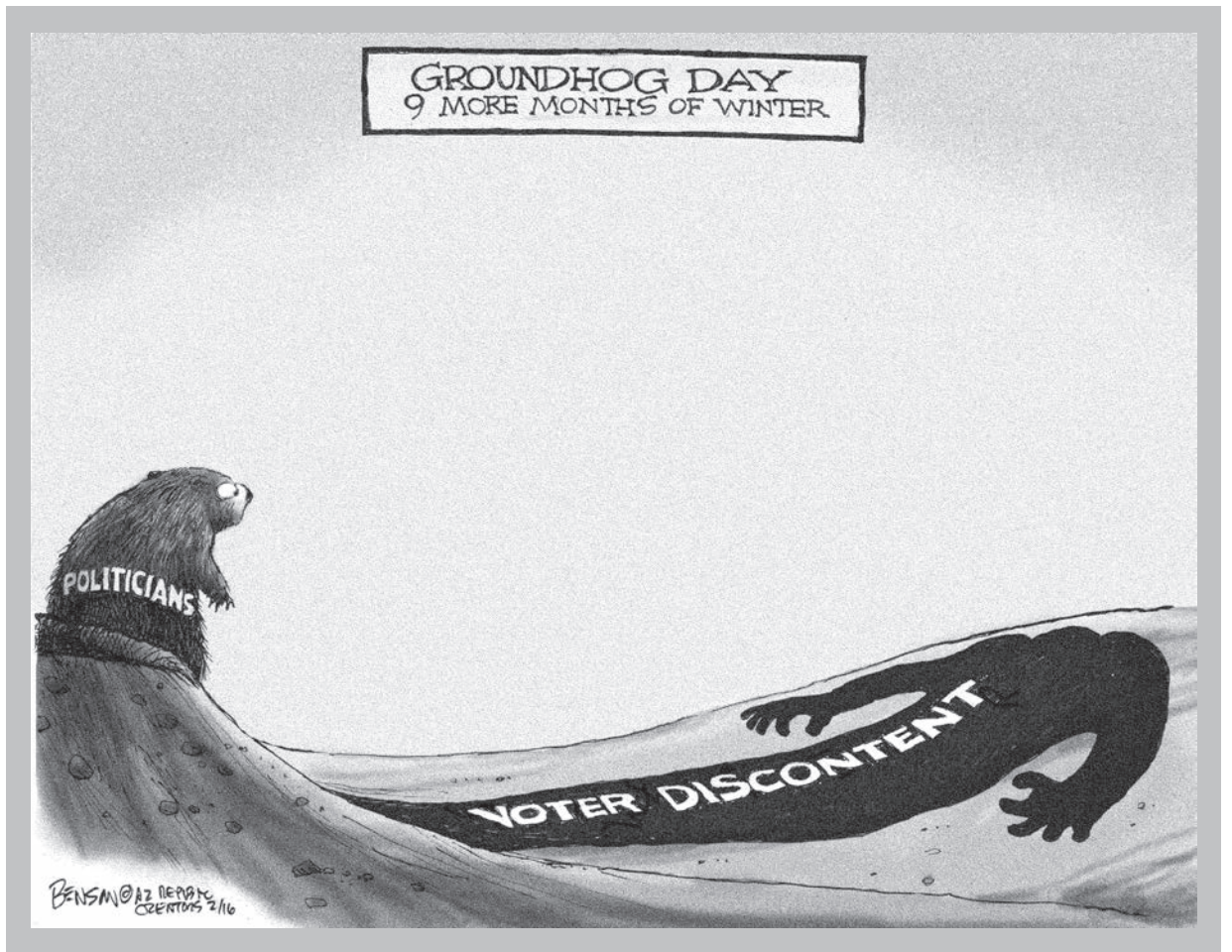
Programs such as this too often get bogged down in the details and the legalities and turf wars. Plotting out a garden-size area that gets sun and is close to a water source would be the first step. That should be very easy to do with the guidance of the school principal and the district's facilities office.

Next would be soliciting donations for the supplies needed to build a raised bed, then the tools and the seeds.

The systems we have in place raise too many obstacles to a simple project such as this. It could be completed if we have the vision and the will to do it.

It is important and timely to add good food to the menu that is offered. As the adage goes, give a man a fish he eats for a day, teach a man to fish he eats for a lifetime. If we cultivate good eating habits in our children now there will be fewer health problems in their future.

—LAZ



## The American Dream has not been stolen

By MICHAEL GERSON

There is one issue on which the whole ideological range of campaign 2016 seems to agree. "The American Dream is dead," says Donald Trump. "For many, the American Dream has become a nightmare," says Bernie Sanders.

Even discounting for the apocalyptic mood of many candidates, this is a justified concern. A way of life in which increased productivity resulted in higher wages and a realistic shot at economic advancement is fragile or failing. For as many as 40 percent of Americans, work now means a series of part-time, temporary, on-call and contract jobs. The old benefit packages and promotion pathways are largely gone. Life has instability, worry and toxic stress at its core.

For those who criticize populist candidates, it is doubly important to understand and address the causes of populist discontent. One of those causes is pervasive, warranted economic anxiety.

The political divide emerges in how this challenge is explained—a division that does not lie between parties or even ideologies. Some believe the American Dream has been stolen. It may have been an inside job, done by Wall Street or wealthy political donors. Or it may have been the work of outsiders such as illegal immigrants, the Mexican government or Chinese competitors. But our economic problem is viewed as effectively a crime.

As economic analysis, this is generally wrong, shallow or partial. But it is the political consequences that concern me.

If the American Dream has been stolen, the main purpose of politics is not to propose policies that ameliorate

other views

this problem or that; it is to define, fight and defeat enemies who have stolen the dream. This approach to public life is inherently personal.

Our economic problems have faces. They may be owned by sneering billionaires, or have a more Latino or Asian aspect. But they certainly don't look like us. They are the scheming, the exploiters, the guilty, the other.

This gives rise to a politics characterized by anger, retribution and enmity. It has the chemical advantage of lighting up the limbic system, the emotional center of the brain. If I remember Psych 101 correctly, this portion of the brain includes the hypothalamus, which regulates the "Four F's" -- fighting, fleeing, feeding and ... mating.

A hypothalamic politics is not oriented toward consensus. In any economic diagnosis that involves fighting the bad guys, progress is a zero-sum game. Some must lose for the virtuous many to win. And this requires not persuasion but revolution -- a word that some presidential candidates use promiscuously.

There are many problems here, but the worst is misdiagnosis, because it undermines the possibility of productive change. The American Dream has not been stolen. It has been undermined by a vast economic transition that has placed American workers in competition with talented workers around the world, and replaced whole categories of labor with new technologies. This has resulted in a consistent downward pressure on wages and a

ruthless demand for higher skills. For many communities, it has meant a more or less permanent recession.

The effective collapse of the blue-collar economy has come at the same time that working-class family structures have dramatically weakened and community institutions -- which once provided assistant or substitute parents -- have fallen apart. Some social scientists emphasize one part of this problem or another, but family, community and economic challenges seem related to one another in complex ways. It is an "all of the above" problem.

This is the real-world context for effective policy. People need the skills, support structure and human capital to succeed in a modern economy. This is definitely not an explanation that elicits a hormonal response. But it is the shared premise of serious policy thinkers on the center right and the center left, presenting the possibility of compromise and agreement. It is possible to shape an innovative role for government that empowers individuals, increases the rewards for work and respects the important place of family and community.

This might be the productive substance of a presidential race between Hillary Clinton and Marco Rubio (or Jeb Bush, or John Kasich). It would probably not be the outcome of Trump vs. Sanders. But the actual problems of our economy will not be solved by barbed wire on our southern border, or by putting Wall Street villains in shackles. It will require politicians who call Americans to the ramparts of an evolution -- educating and equipping all our citizens, one by one, for a different and difficult economy. In that, there should be no enemies. (Washington Post Writers Group)

## A sobering visit

By LYNDON ZAITZ

I went to Los Angeles last week for some sunshine and warmth. There wasn't much of that but I did come away thoughtful. I wanted to visit several art museums that weekend but all had lines out the door due to free admission Saturday. I eschewed art and embraced history.

My friend and I headed for the Museum of Tolerance on the west side. Though most visitors seek the entertainment southern California has to offer, a visit to this museum should be required.

In addition to the regular displays was an Anne Frank exhibition. We all think we know the story, Dutch girl, hiding in an attic, captured, killed by the Nazis. Some of that is true, other points not so much—she and her sister Margot died of ill health while in a camp, two weeks before it was liberated by the Allies.

Before we walked through the Anne Frank exhibit we viewed dozens of videos, displays and writings that addressed intolerance, not just against Jews but all people—blacks, Muslims, you name it.

All the exhibits at the museum are powerful and as thought-provoking as it is meant to be. Only the most entrenched bigot can walk out of that museum without feeling a bit ashamed about how they treated someone who was different at some point. The museum is not political correctness run amok, it is a profound statement about humanity and how respect and dignity are key to achieving peace.

Much of the main exhibition space is devoted to the Holocaust—how Adolph Hitler rose to power. He was elected Chancellor by the people in 1933 by playing on the German people's anger at their lot after World War I; he and the Nazis played all of Germany's ills on the Jews.

There are videos of Kristallnacht (the night shops owned by Jews were looted and destroyed by the National Socialist Party with the support of Aryan Germans). There are displays of artifacts fashioned in

on my mind

concentration camps by imprisoned Jews for their religious rites. It is all very sobering. And scary. Scary to realize what man does to man for reasons many don't understand to this day.

There are many photographs of the small children rounded up with their parents and sent off to work or concentration camps. Beautiful little children whose only crime was they were born Jewish. The mass operation of wiping Jews off the face of the earth resulting in the Final Solution.

Going through the Anne Frank exhibit I was struck by the maturity of this 13-year-old girl who wrote so beautifully. She was a prolific writer, sending letters to her cousins and of course her diary. She wrote of her daily life (before and after she and her family hid in that attic) in a way that puts you right there.

The most amazing aspect of my visit to the museum was a chance meeting with Angelina. At first I thought she was just another museum visitor, sitting down and taking a rest. Angelina, 88, is a survivor. A German Jew, she was sent to a camp in Estonia at the age of seven. She never saw her family again and herself had been sent to seven different camps.

Angelina was spry and well-spoken. I could have talked with her for hours but I only shared a few minutes with her. Before me was a living reminder of modern history's most tragic events.

There were many students touring the museum that day. I asked one boy what he thought of the museum and he said it was neat. I told him the same thing is happening today in a place called Syria (of which he had never heard). My parting words to that one boy was to pay attention to the world, be informed.

A visit to the museum may not be southern California fun, but it is southern California necessary.

(Lyndon Zaitz is publisher of the *Keizertimes*.)

## Teach teachers better than we are now

Governor Kate Brown informs us she will appoint an "education innovation officer." This appointee will have no clout but will have the backing of the two state-level education agencies and must possess ears the size of an elephant as this gubernatorial appointee will have as an assignment to listen to the state's school district officials and members of the communities they serve.

It's hard to imagine what, if anything of substance or consequence, will become of this; that is, whether it's just another Kitzhaber-like boondoggle. First and foremost, to make any real difference this time around, the state would have to make drastic changes to the way teachers are prepared to teach. The way things are done now, in our teacher-training institutions, each aspiring wannabe must matriculate a four-year collection of often disjointed subject-matter courses. The four-year stint is then followed by a year's time invested in education courses.

Unfortunately to the outcome, most of the fifth college year, that also earns a Masters degree, is simply more course work taught by professors who usually have not been in a grades K-12 classroom for years. Only during the last two months of the fifth year, the graduate works with a classroom teacher—who volunteers to serve in this capacity—although they may or may not be an effective teacher. Further, that teacher is too often not supervised in the endeavor. Soon, the "graduate" is teaching on their own with minimal training to know how to succeed, except mainly by instinct.

gene h. mcintyre

If Governor Brown wants to make a difference to the quality of education in this state, she'd

change the preparation of teachers. Under a new order of things, public colleges and universities in the state would no longer offer fifth-year teacher preparation courses; rather, these public colleges would serve strictly as clearinghouses and readiness assessors. This role would have them work with school districts to find highly qualified teachers to serve as mentors to those who want to become a teacher. After a year's time with a veteran teacher in a classroom setting, the novice would be assessed by a team of qualified professionals hired from the ranks of recognized-as-outstanding teachers who wish to work at designing and implementing assessment tools to determine whether a novice is ready for a classroom of their own.

As for a state innovation officer going out to talk to superintendents and other school management types, among the teachers and townfolk they may talk to, the highest school officers are typically entrenched traditionalists who will say and do whatever needs to be said and shown to maintain the status quo and their positions. To really get at what needs to change to deliver education at the most effective level, a state officer must be interested in seeing to it that change is taking place from efforts to better prepare our teachers for classroom dynamics and learning

leadership.

This effort to improve public education in Oregon is going to have to receive the time and attention in many more ways than the laissez faire treatment the likes of which our former governor paid to his education reforms. If changes come to pass then we've got a wholesale sweeping away of what's been done to a wholly new way of doing things. Many people in the state must be involved, not just a handful of big-time campaign contributors with no education experience. The training of school administrators at all levels must accompany any reform of classroom teacher training changes as those folks now are too typically a combination ambitious politician and total autocrat.

Since World War II, the U.S. has fallen behind many other developed nations. One of the top reasons is the way we train our teachers and administrators. If only our politicians would back off from their winless ways of trying to reform education and get those people directly involved with it: Those teachers who have the experience and know how to produce successful results.

When people do again what's always been done then it's called futility. Unless Governor Kate Brown does a lot more than what she's planning to do via a state innovation officer, we'll be at the same place a year or two from now when failure again is the expensive outcome and few if any educational improvements are made available to our kids.

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

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