

# KeizerOpinion

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## Eclipse City, USA

In less than two years a major marketing opportunity will present itself to Keizer and every organization, including the city, should be thinking about how to capitalize on it.

There will be a total solar eclipse on Monday, Aug. 21, 2017. Keizer is smack in the middle of the path of the eclipse. Total eclipses happen about once a year somewhere in the world but very rarely do they happen here.

Experts say the best place to exhibit a total eclipse is out in uninhabited areas such as the deserts of eastern Oregon. Traveling to the high desert on a Monday is not an option for everyone, that opens possibilities to attract visitors to Keizer.

The city council can proclaim Keizer *Eclipse City USA* for starters. Will the eclipse be seen in other cities in America? Sure, but Keizer should be the first to give itself that moniker.

editorial

Working with the Keizer Chamber of Commerce the city can organize a large eclipse viewing party somewhere in the city such as Keizer Rapids Park (or better yet, Keizer Station for the economic aspects) and promote it. It would enhance the experience if as many lights as possible could be turned off for 15 minutes.

Keizer-centric souvenirs can be designed and sold ("I saw the eclipse in Keizer" perhaps?). Merchants can take advantage of the eclipse and the spectators it should attract with Black Monday specials akin to Black Friday sales.

Keizer doesn't need any permission to declare itself Eclipse City USA any more than it needed permission to call itself the Iris Capital of the World.

— LAZ

## Lottery bill to benefit veterans

By Paul Evans

Oregonians serving with the 116th Air Control Squadron recently received a warm, well-deserved welcome from family, friends, and neighbors at a demobilization ceremony at Camp Withycombe (Clackamas).

Even as we celebrate their homecoming, we should take a moment to reflect upon the ongoing challenges our veterans face upon return. These men and women deserve a soft-landing—a thoughtful reintegration into our communities. Some of our returning hometown heroes are coming back to a supportive environment; some are not. And thousands of veterans from previous eras struggle to survive.

Our veterans deserve access to education and employment assistance, mental health care services, affordable housing and transportation. Too often our veterans are forgotten despite the impacts of service upon their lives. During 2015, the Oregon Legislature made a significant investment in outreach adding close to \$1,000,000 more for County Veterans' Service Officers and established a dedicated position for women veterans' coordination. We also established a task force for identifying ways to help the growing number of incarcerated veterans.

This year I am sponsoring legislation supporting a 3 percent set-aside of Oregon Lottery profits for unlocking opportunities throughout Oregon to capture federal funds so many of our veterans have earned but are not yet receiving. The goal is to develop a fund for leveraging potential partnerships that could help us secure as much as \$4 billion in dedicated veterans' assistance that many veterans and military families should have access to but don't.

Current data suggests that more than 250,000 Oregon veterans are not

guest column

recognized within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs structures and systems. This means that existing healthcare and transportation activities, among others, are funded only at the level of the number of veterans recognized: approximately 100,000 of 350,000. The 3 percent of lottery funds dedicated to veterans' services will support targeted outreach and provide seed money for leveraging available programming. Clearly, the State of Oregon can, and should, make an historic investment in veterans' care. To be clear, this proposal expressly forbids any impact upon education and/or parks funding. The Constitutionally mandated 18 percent and 15 percent set-asides remain unchanged. At present the federal government returns at least \$77 for every one dollar of state investment. This approach has support from many legislators from both political parties as a smart investment of scarce resources.

Numbers tell only parts of the story. As a veteran, and as a member of Oregon's Legislature, I know firsthand of the opportunities and challenges awaiting our service men and women. We are engaged in three overseas conflicts. Our military members are facing multiple deployments and significant long-term stresses resulting from their time in uniform. Oregon can better extend the safety net of services to our military personnel and their families.

We live in a world of complex challenges five generations of veterans are now facing. It is time we keep faith with the men and women we send into harm's way. The lottery set-aside is a way to start.

(Paul Evans is the Representative in Oregon House District 20. He can be reached at rep.paulevans@state.or.us.)



## Trump's authenticity is a lie

By MICHAEL GERSON

When the Watergate tapes were released, some Americans were dismayed at the many "expletives deleted" that Richard Nixon employed in private conversation. But as historian Stephen Ambrose pointed out, Nixon had insisted that even the milder words "hell" and "damn" be deleted from the transcriptions, creating the false impression that his language was saltier than it actually was. "If my mother ever heard me use words like that," Nixon explained, "she would turn over in her grave."

No inner check constrained Donald Trump from using the F-word during a presidential campaign rally in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. "We're gonna have businesses that used to be in New Hampshire, that are now in Mexico," he told a crowd, "come back to New Hampshire, and you can tell them to go [bleep] themselves!"

Many people, particularly the ones unburdened by knowledge of economics, will respond, "Hell yeah!" We are a culture conditioned by cable television, which has made the language of sailors, mobsters and New York real estate developers available to any digitally literate 11-year-old. This, after all, is the way "real life" sounds.

Let us hope not. In real life, expletives are often used as a form of aggression or cruelty. A co-worker who tells you to Trump yourself is usually being unpleasant. A co-worker who does this every day is often creating a hostile or demeaning work environment. Language suitable for decent company is a form of politeness, which is a species of respect, which is an expression

other views

of morality. And if I am the last holdout on this issue, so be it. I don't really give a damn.

Win or lose, Trump has

brought the language and sensibilities of cable TV to presidential politics. This is a relatively small transgression in a campaign that has involved groundbreaking appeals to ethnic and religious resentment. But there is a rhetorical strategy at work here worth noting. In recent rallies, Trump—in addition to telling people to go "F---" themselves—said he would "beat the s---" out of anyone attacking us. Trump identifies crudity with populism, as if using words of four letters were a protest against prim elites. Rough language is intended to convey strength and authenticity. On both counts, it amounts to deception.

Trump employs tough-sounding language, along with the promise of war crimes (proposing killing the families of terrorists), as cover for a frighteningly feckless foreign policy. On the main humanitarian and strategic disaster of our time—the collapse of sovereignty in Syria and Iraq and the rise of the Islamic State—Trump's answer is to farm influence out to the Russians. "Let Syria and ISIS fight. Why do we care?" Trump has argued. "And let Russia, they're in Syria already, let them fight ISIS."

Just to summarize, Trump is proposing for the United States to encourage a coalition of Russia, Iran and the remnants of Bashar al-Assad's Syr-

ian regime to fight the Islamic State and the rest of the Sunni rebels. This would recognize Russian strategic dominance over a region that still produces nearly 40 percent of the world's oil supplies. It would concur in Iran's bid for regional hegemony and probably frighten our abandoned Sunni allies into desperate acts (such as going nuclear). And it would reward Assad's mass atrocities against Sunni civilians, which is a major generator of recruits for the Islamic State.

In this case, a foul mouth is meant to cover up for Trump's ignorance and weakness. No actual enemy of America would be impressed by his trompe l'oeil toughness.

The whole equation of profanity with authenticity is deeply confused. There is an honesty, of sorts, in swearing when you hit your thumb with a hammer. But in presidential communication, authenticity is more than the id and tongue unleashed. Abraham Lincoln and other great presidents were authentic communicators because they treated serious things seriously, crafting policy and speeches that often challenged immediate emotional responses, expanded empathy and employed the cadences and spare language of memorable rhetoric.

Trump's intentional push against boundaries of taste is really the search for a darting spotlight, like a TV show that has gone on for a season too long and tries to ramp up controversy as a substitute for buzz. Even Trump's authenticity, it turns out, is a lie.

(Washington Post Writers Group)

## Real action not lip service for schools

The *Keizertimes* recently reported that Salem-Keizer Schools superintendent Christy Perry received high marks from the school board for the 2014-2015 school year.

The board looked at student performance against state averages, graduation rates, dropout rates, English language learner performance and growth in the percentage of schools that show above-average growth compared to similar Oregon schools. Apparently there was nothing about special services to homeless youth, new, innovative learning improvement ventures, or other demanding educational and social issues that nowadays fall into the lap of public schools.

It was noted, too, that she worked for staff compliance with district policies while also paying attention to "small areas" of non-compliance. She had performed these tasks and reported them "regularly" to the board. Further, she established "excellent relationships" with the board and community partners. The board did not blame her for lower academic scores as she "has done an admirable job of moving and maintaining academic scores." Are these matters not assumed in the list of basic responsibilities assigned Oregon's public school superintendents and how much flexibility for failures are there?

Of course, news items about any superintendent's success, somewhat rare these days from dropout land, are welcome. Meanwhile, the board members who chose her will continue to pat themselves on the back for making what they apparently believe was a notable choice. However, what typically follows from these assessment sessions is what anyone else would view at best as a business-as-usual performance, deserving a standard cost of living adjustment (COLA).

gene h. mcintyre

Unfortunately for us taxpayers, what usually follows is a huge raise in salary for what amounts to mediocrity and, then, too, additional perks hidden from the public eye.

Now, let's get to the important issues: To what extent are those who assessed the superintendent's work over the past year qualified by training and experience to make valid conclusions on the items the school chief chose to present to them to judge her? And, are they provided enough background information from the superintendent's office to be confident by investigative inquiry in their conclusions?

One wonders, in addition to board members, to what extent any taxpayer can obtain and scrutinize the facts and, with knowledge in hand, advise his board member. It's believed from experience that the superintendent's office is mostly a closed shop to all but a few trusted staff insiders whose continued employment is based on their ability to remain in mute mode. The usual inquiry is almost always greeted with mutterings about confidentiality followed by a feint-hearted apologetic denial to access that would require a court-order to see.

Further, there are more problems in the delivery of education than anyone finding out about their size and shape can fathom. That's why public education today is failing in so many ways and why no real reform will happen to improve the quality of it under the way education is managed now and has been for years.

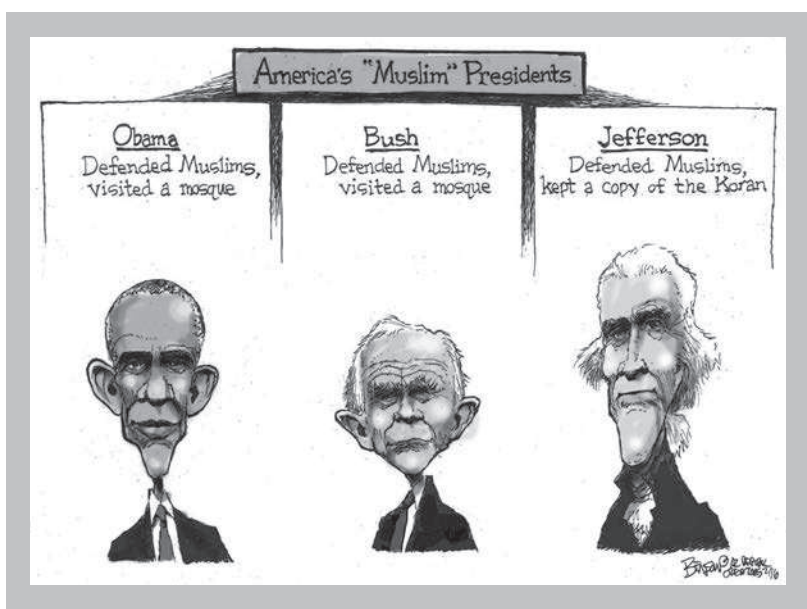
There are at least two reforms that should be acted on by our lawmakers, having been led by a governor

who cares and is intelligent enough to know value from waste. Since superintendents currently answer only to boards they can readily manipulate (which means they answer to themselves), the law should be changed whereby school superintendents are elected. Require candidates to make public their specific goals and objectives, their plans of action and their intended reforms: those they will act on and by which they will be measured. Hold them to what they've promised to do through a presentation of results twice a year in public presentations. Keep their books open to reputable, private accounting firm audits.

End the era of elected boards. These well-meaning locals who volunteer to face election to gain a seat on the local school board start off, it's surmised, dedicated to looking after the children and youth in the schools under their purview. Meanwhile, the superintendent and her subordinates hold all the cards and share only that information that the superintendent decides to share and is in her best keep-a-job interest. In other words, boards too often become "yes" men and women, mostly co-opted to do whatever the superintendent, diplomatically mind you, tells them to do.

Taxpayers waste public dollars and students and their families get short-changed by the way things are done now. The greatest wish for education here is that we'd elect a legislature and governor interested enough in making our schools work so they'd intervene decisively to re-design the way our schools are managed, thereby worth the 12 years time investment of our children who fall away now in big numbers long before grade 12.

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



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