

KeizerOpinion

KEIZERTIMES.COM

Where art thou, volunteers?

Since it became an organized community and then an incorporated city, in 1982, Keizer has relied on the kindness of its residents to volunteer to fulfill the many roles in city government and other organizations.

editorial

not had a formal meeting in months because no quorum was present to allow for formal action.

What has happened to the third word of Keizer's motto of pride, spirit and volunteerism? Unlike the late 1970s and early 1980s

At a time, decades ago, the center of the community was Keizer Little League (KLL), one of the most successful youth baseball programs in Oregon. Keizer Little League teams played on a field complex that was the envy of other Little Leagues. It was from the ranks of KLL volunteers that was born future leaders of the city: city councilors, mayors and leaders of committees and organizations.

The Big Toy at Keizer Rapids Park is now a reality. That came to fruition due to the many hours and the experience donated by volunteers. The community build of The Big Toy was heralded for months before it happened. Hundreds of residents registered to volunteer in one of the many realms of the build. Unfortunately, many of the people who signed up never showed to volunteer, pushing the completion of the project back by a week, and forcing those who did show up to work long hours.

The Little League fields have been a source of contention between the two baseball organizations for several years. In decades past, baseball parents were all too happy to spend their volunteer time to maintain the fields, coach and operate the concession stand. Not so much these days.

The city has a constant roster of committee, board and task force vacancies to fill. Too few people have stepped up to serve on the bodies that do a lot of the preliminary work on city projects. The city council had to act and they approved legislation that allowed a person to serve on more than one committee. The Keizer Points of Interest Committee has

there are many more opportunities for Keizer residents to satisfy their contribution to society. Keizer Little League has been joined by KYSA, Keizer Youth Basketball, Keizer Soccer Club as well as non-athletic groups such as Keizer Art Association, the Keizer Community Library, Keizer Community Band. Add in the one-time or once a year projects that require volunteers: Keizer Iris Festival, the turf project at McNary High School and The Big Toy. All these are joined by teams, churches, schools and clubs.

It is not so much a dearth of volunteer bodies as it is a wealth of ways a resident can offer themselves. In 2013 when a seat on the Keizer City Council became vacant, seven candidates applied for the volunteer position. Three years later another council vacancy attracted one candidate.

Keizer is home to working family households which must juggle job, school and recreation schedules. Families have to decide where their heart lays when it comes to adding volunteer hours to their busy schedules. It is no contest when it comes down to something with which their children are involved or a city committee.

Any organization seeking volunteers will do themselves well if instead of sending out a clarion call for volunteers, they send out a roster of volunteer duties and hours needed. Unfortunately, it seems that the days of overflowing with helping hands could be a thing of the past unless the call for volunteers is sent out in a way that appeals to a busy society.

—LAZ

Bruce Anderson: councilor

Bruce Anderson was chosen by the Keizer City Council to fill a vacancy on that body at a meeting Monday. It was an unanimous vote; Anderson was the only applicant for the opening.

Anderson is an excellent addition to the council. In his private sector career he has served in positions in top industries. Currently he is Regional Community Affairs Manager for NW Natural. He lobbies the state legislature which puts him face to face with lawmakers of all stripes and from all parts of the state. That will come in handy should Keizer need legislative help in seeking to expand the Urban Growth Bound-

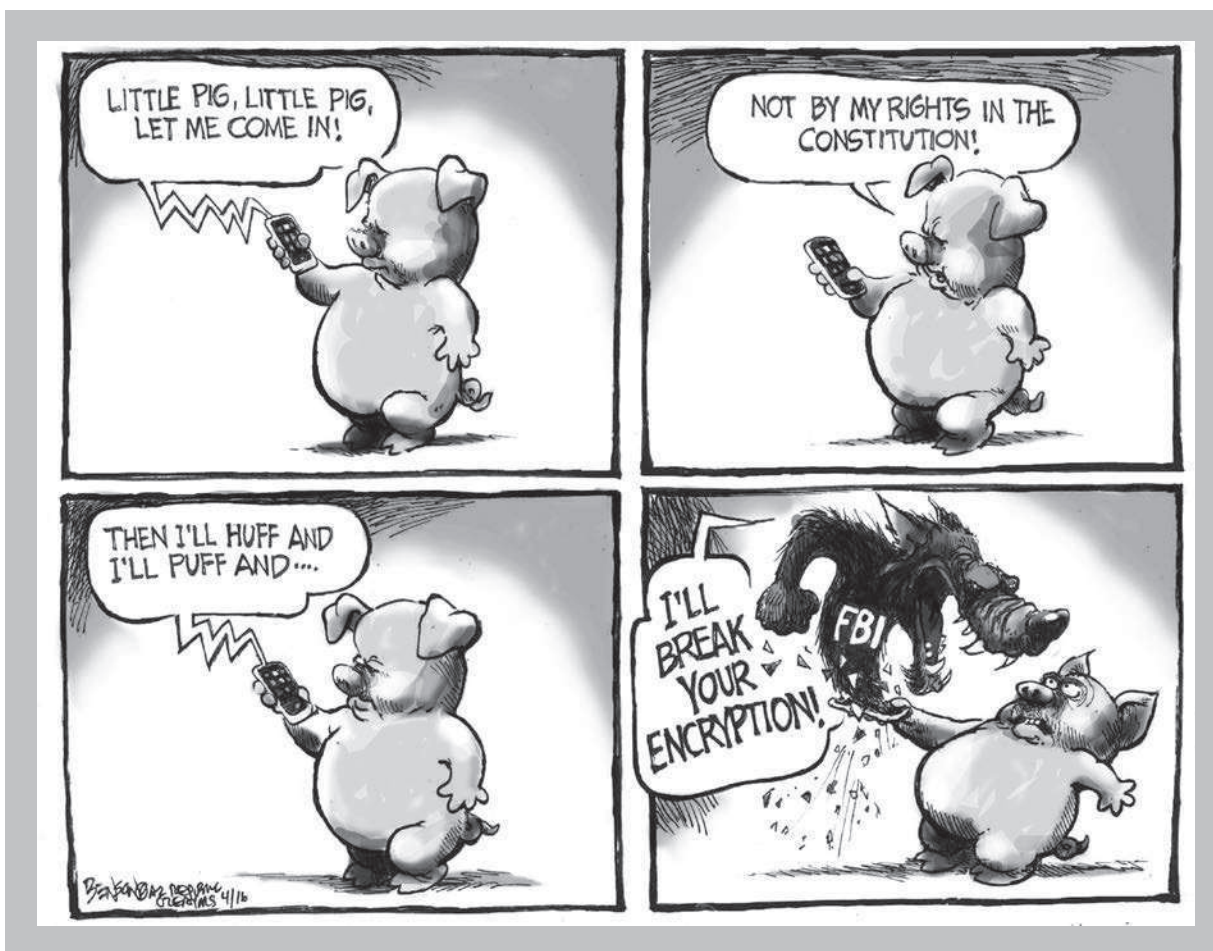
ary. Before NW Natural he held top jobs at Northwest Food Processors Association, Oregon Life Underwriters Association and the Oregon Home Builders Association.

For those who wanted to see a councilor from the business world, there was no better applicant than Mr. Anderson.

The council's newest member will be able to hit the ground running; he's already versed in many of the topics that will come up the rest of the year.

We think Bruce Anderson is the right additional to the council at the right time.

—LAZ



The 2016 election's nasty spirit

By MICHAEL GERSON

In a campaign that has involved talk of revisiting the Geneva Conventions, rewriting the 14th Amendment and rounding up and expelling 11 million people, failures of politeness, violations of manners, would seem a secondary concern. But in this political cycle, insults, invective and coarseness have been charged with a political significance. They are intended to indicate authenticity and a fighting spirit—the liberation of politics from political correctness and elite sensibilities.

Some find this invigorating; others offensive. But it is one of the ways that the election of 2016 will be remembered—for playground taunts, for attacks on candidates' families, for vulgar bodily references and for a nasty, ungenerous spirit.

This is hardly unprecedented. To the contrary, our country's conception of proper manners has often moved in a generational cycle. Various movements of the late 1960s, for example, involved liberation from stifling social conformity. This created necessary space for the unconventional, while changing stupid and oppressive conventions (such as social prohibitions on interracial marriage, or, later, bigotry against gays and lesbians).

But all attempts to overthrow etiquette in favor of what is "real" come from a belief (that tip to Jean-Jacques Rousseau) that what comes naturally is also good. In real life, what comes naturally to human beings—as anyone who has cared for small human beings will tell you—is often selfish, petulant and rude. All children are Donald Trump before they are taught manners.

People get tired of living in a society filled with the sharp corners of incivility. The mannerlessness of the

other views

late 1960s and 1970s produced a backlash of good taste, symbolized by the popularity of Miss Manners (aka Judith Martin) in the Reagan's rather courtly formality.

What is different this time is that the challenge to manners is coming from the right—not the "free speech movement" but from brushfire populism. The standards and values of reality television—the exaggerated feuds, the personal vilification and the deleted expletives—have invaded the political realm. And it is a form of social decay.

America's founders actually thought and wrote a lot about manners. (No. 2 on the "Rules of Civility" George Washington copied down as a boy: "When in company, put not your hands to any part of the body not usually discovered." I imagine this would also cover references to your manhood during a presidential debate.) The founders worried that a society without an aristocracy would lack obvious standards of propriety. But it is good manners that allow citizens to argue without coming to blows, and even to find productive compromise.

Manners are not the same thing as morality. They are practical rules for living together. Unlike morality, manners vary greatly by country and tribe, as well as across time. But being relative does not make them trivial. Particularly in a democracy, good manners involve an affirmation that we, all of us, are part of the same community, and that everyone is due a certain minimal amount of respect.

Poor manners, in contrast, can indicate the dehumanization of individuals and groups. The boor is often the bigot.

"America has, in theory, the best code of manners the world has ever seen," argues Miss Manners. "That's because it is based on respect for the individual, regardless of his or her origin. Good manners in America are about helping strangers. They're also about judging people on their qualities rather than on their backgrounds. These are principles that were deliberately worked out by our Founding Fathers to assure the dignity of the individual and keep society nonhierarchical."

This is what should appeal to conservatives the most. Good manners create a livable community without recourse to laws and regulations. They create ties among citizens that are not based on compulsion. When we stand in a stadium with our hand over our hearts, or refrain from using bad language in front of children in the subway, or disagree about politics without becoming personal and vicious, we add a few invisible strands that hold our community and democracy together. In most everyday circumstances, manners matter more than laws.

This is a social contract. We treat people with respect in the hope and expectation we will be treated with respect. And people who demand respect without showing it are properly viewed as narcissists or sociopaths.

Those who equate crudeness and cruelty with authenticity are doing a nasty disservice to their country, making it that much harder to live together. Those who want to serve their country should mind their manners.

(Washington Post Writers Group)

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Lottery revenue lets business off tax hook

The Oregon Center for Public Policy (OCCPP) of Silverton has lobbied the state's government since 1990 on budget, tax and economic issues with a goal "to improve decision-making and generate more opportunities for all Oregonians." Over its lifetime, it has weighed in on how certain policies like welfare assistance programs, taxes, minimum wages and unemployment benefits would affect Oregonians.

Recently, its website featured an article by OCCPP staff member Juan Carlos Ordonez titled *More disgraceful than the lottery: Oregon's corporate income tax*. Ordonez writes that if any Oregonian wants to look at the shameful state of Oregon's corporate income tax, look no further than the nearest bar or restaurant with video lottery machines. People go to these places with their machines and lose and lose to an extent that adds up to the majority amount of revenue collected by the Oregon Lottery.

The article also reports that more than half of the nearly 12,000 video lottery terminals are found in low income neighborhoods. The bottom line is that the state lottery brings in mostly money from preying on poor people, those hoping for a break in their bad luck in losing money by playing the games.

OCCPP then asks "What does this have to do with Oregon's corporate income tax?" Well, the answer OCCPP provides is that the Oregon Lottery puts more money into the state treasury than all the corporate income tax. So, all this adds up to the fact that while some Oregonians struggle to meet their financial obligations by

gene h. mcintyre

gambling addictions, they do more to support public obligations like support of our public schools than the Bank of America, Verizon, Walmart and all the other national corporations doing business in this state combined.

Shame gets heaped on the matter when you consider the costs involved. \$1.1 billion was lost by Oregon Lottery players last year. About 19 percent or less went back to the state to help fund public services while 32 percent of the losses went to pay for the lottery itself: commissions, salaries, equipment, marketing and related lottery costs. Incidentally, the Department of Revenue, in charge of income and other tax programs, uses only 2 percent of collections to run the place.

What one could view as negative changes within the Oregon Lottery has occurred over the years. Before the Oregon Lottery, corporations paid about 18 percent of all income taxes collected. Nowadays, their share of the state's tax burden has shrunk to 7 percent. How this state of condition came about is by lobbyists earning their keep by securing a whole host of corporate loopholes and subsidies. Hence, they now, with help from lawyers and accountants, can avoid their fair share of the cost of running all public matters in Oregon; in spite of Oregon's modest corporate minimum tax, some corporations at present pay no taxes at all.

In this context, as costs to keep Oregon's public services alive, the taxes avoided could help to pay for the schools that educate their workers, the courts that resolve their disputes, and the public safety services that protect their property. Meanwhile, those losing money on gambling temptations as well as those in the shrinking middle class must make up for what the national corporations don't pay while the tax system also directly subsidizes corporations in Oregon by way of a lengthy list of tax credits, deductions and subtractions.

The Oregon Lottery was approved by voters in 1984 as the answer to what economically ailed us here. About eight years later the video lottery games appeared about which the lottery boasted that these were "the first 23-hour, centrally controlled gaming system in the country." The ultimate result has been a shift in responsibility of paying for public services away from those most able to pay to those least able to do so.

Initiative Petition 28 is being circulated to address and redress this lopsided situation. If passed it would raise taxes on large, out-of-state corporations and could bring into the state's financial picture, billions of dollars to invest in our schools, health care system and senior services among other pressing money-issue priorities. Presumably, a greater effort than the one underway now could be earmarked for gambling addicts. Initiative Petition 28 could finally be something worth betting on.

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

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