

KeizerOpinion

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Summer distractions

This summer the nation seems to be going crazy—mass murders, killing of cops, shootings of African-Americans that has intensified the battle between Black Lives Matter, Blue Lives Matter and All Lives Matter. It makes a Keizerite want to turn off the news and revel in life here in our little corner of the world.

We should not bury our heads and tell the world to go away—it won't. The best antidote to a world gone crazy is to enjoy what our community has to offer and the coming weeks will have plenty of offerings for the most cynical.

At this writing there are two of the four scheduled performances remaining of Keizer Homegrown Theatre's Shakespeare in the Park production of *Twelfth Night* (one the Bard's more accessible plays). The free show starts at 6:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday at the Keizer Rotary Amphitheatre at Keizer Rapids Park. Filled with pirates, the show is a good summertime diversion for any age.

Other free events coming up include city-sponsored concerts at the amphitheatre scheduled for six dates in August plus the final concert featuring JFK in September.

For those whose artistic tastes run more toward paintings and the like, the Hallie Ford Museum of Art on State St. in Salem has free admission every Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The eighth annual Canterbury Renaissance Faire is being held this week and next weekend near Silverton. This event is a step back about 400 years with costumed players enacting life during the Renaissance including

jousts.

Finishing up this weekend is the Bite and Brew of Salem at Riverfront Park.

Opening this week and playing through August 28 is *The Wizard of Oz*, the stage production presented by Enlightened Theatrics at the Historic Grand Theatre in downtown Salem. The production company aims to build itself into an influential regional theatre; see this show and you can say "I knew them when..."

Antique Powerland on Brooklake Road north of Keizer stages its annual Great Oregon Steam-up that runs the last weekend of July and the first weekend of August. This event is good for families and kids (who never seem to tire of seeing tractors and threshers and all the hundreds of other attractions and activities.

Aside from the man-made events there are beaches, mountains and rivers to visit to take one's mind off real life from the national and international news.

We all need distractions when things seem unsettled. These certainly fit that bill. When the world doesn't make sense go crazy at one of the many events our region has to offer this summer.

—LAZ

editorial

A poor choice of words

To the Editor:

During the last budget meeting Mayor Cathy Clark stated that "there needs to be an 'honest' conversation about what type of community we want."

Now this week the mayor is quoted in the *Keizertimes* saying, "we need to have a 'grown up' conversation about our tax rate." The mayor is also quoted as saying "she is ready to have a larger conversation to increase the city budget."

The city finance officer cites a property tax income of \$4.8 million for fiscal year 2014-15 and the police alone cost the city \$5.1 million for that year.

So mayor, here is my honest and grown up conversation related to the Keizer budget:

1. Keizer last updated its tax base during the November 5, 1996 election.

2. In 2011 the citizens of Keizer defeated a Public Safety Communication Tax with 80 percent voting no.

3. In 2015 the citizens of Keizer defeated a transit tax measure.

letters

4. The total revenue for the 2014-15 fiscal year was \$36.8 million.

5. The state of Oregon recently required that the minimum wage be raised. Regardless of anyone's opinion on the issue, it will raise costs for everyone and hit seniors the hardest.

6. In November IP 28 will be on the ballot to raise the tax on corporations. Again regardless of anyone's opinion on the issue, if passed, it will raise costs for everyone and hit seniors the hardest.

When the mayor ran for office she stated "As mayor, I pledge to continue these services and the 'Keizer Way' of doing things with energy, thoughtfulness and dedication."

We now know the mayor's statement appears to mean; that in her opinion past budget committee members and city councilors have not had "honest" or "grown up" conversations about our city budget and when she's elected mayor we're going to see how much money we can squeeze out of Keizer residents.

Thanks for your support, mayor.

Jim Keller
Keizer

Stuck between the political extremes

I switched my voter registration to 'non-affiliated' several years ago. I have felt less affiliated every year since, feeling stranded in what I suspect is a vast pool of voters abandoned between the ideological rigidity of the extreme left and the extreme right.

It looks like we will be asked in the November presidential election to vote for either Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump. These candidates are characterized as having the lowest approval ratings ever seen in a presidential election. Neither seems well-chosen for their ability to bridge the wide gulf between ideological extremes.

In the slightly naive hope that some ideas or proposals would be advanced, I watched the first night of the Republican National Convention Monday night—*Make America Safe Again*. Instead we got a steady diet of doom and catastrophe. A mother lamented the loss of her son at Benghazi and laid the blame squarely on then-Secretary of State Clinton for lack of security/safety. Many more embassy personnel were lost in previous administrations yet requests for increased embassy security, costly in every way, were never funded by a dysfunctional Congress. With Secretary Clinton, the soldier's mother, and a Congressional delegation seated at the same table, do you think reasonable compromise could be reached?

Mike Pence is a sign of Trump's weakness

By E.J. DIONNE JR.

Donald Trump's selection of Indiana Gov. Mike Pence as his running mate is just what everyone is saying it is: a safe, traditional choice. Pence won't hurt Trump too much and may help him with Republican politicians and some conservatives.

But the pick is also—and more importantly—something else: a sign of real weakness. There were many Republicans who could have helped Trump far more. He could not turn to them because they are scrambling as far away from this ticket as they could.

And there were Republicans with whom Trump personally felt far more comfortable: New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie and former House Speaker Newt Gingrich. Trump could not turn to where his heart seemed to want to go because both were too much like him and carried too much baggage. The irrepressible Gingrich blurted out the truth: that he and Trump would constitute "a two pirate ticket," whereas Pence was "a relatively stable, more normal person." Never let it be said that Newt is entirely bereft of self-awareness.

The biggest loss to Trump comes from the refusal of so many Republicans even to be considered for the job. Gov. John Kasich or Sen. Rob Portman would have brought more political heft to the ticket for the simple reason that they are from Ohio, at or near the top of the must-win list for candidates in election after election. Kasich had the potential to reach far beyond Trump's con-

Leaders needed to keep US safe, secure

Should there be a hint of nervousness even in the most stalwart American heart nowadays, it may have something to do with the fact that another crazed Muslim extremist drove a big truck through a large crowd in Nice, France, murdering 84 persons and harming multiple others.

France has become a dangerous place where already hundreds of lives have been lost to the onslaught of Muslim extremists. Nevertheless, even after the Charlie Hedbo newspaper killings, the December assaults in Paris and last week's killing-by-truck in Nice, French President Francois Hollande has managed only to declare an emergency while Muslims continue to seethe in over-crowded slums where poverty and deprivation reign, and ISIS devotees and returnees plot more bloody attacks.

The world owes what it got to a couple of American political leaders, one of which acted on a perceived insult to his father, the other, a former Halliburton executive who, it's generally believed, saw the opportunity for millions of dollars added to his personal wealth, started an unprovoked war with Iraq's President Saddam Hussein.

President Barack Obama promised that, if elected, he would get us out of warring ways in the Middle East. That promise was broken when he caved to the wishes of Republican hawks who wanted the United States to continue fighting Arabs in the Middle East no matter how obviously mindless its continuation has become.

Just the other day Obama ordered

a box of soap

Events of last week painfully reminded us that there remains racial tension in America.

An African-American sheriff from Wisconsin's Milwaukee County was trotted out Monday night to assign blame to the Black Lives Matter movement. Maybe we are instead capable of believing there are many truths. Racial prejudice does exist. It is utterly wrong to target police officers. Areas of high crime can more certainly be identified by level of poverty than color of skin. If we lock Sheriff David Clarke, black activists and a Congressional delegation in the same room could they find a way to go forward?

President Barack Obama received much credit Monday for the wave of Mideast terrorism. Troops were withdrawn too soon from Iraq. Troops have been in Afghanistan since 2001, but you still may resist booking a summer trip to Kabul. It is just as easy to make the case that declaring war on Iraq created hatred for the West. Agreement seems unlikely no matter who you collect to discuss this.

My hypothetical pool of voters is left unrepresented in the void between the two major parties. Maybe it would be better if candidates

were elected for advocating legislation that benefits not their party, but their country. I don't believe these candidates can be produced from the two-party, money-driven hysteria and hyperbole of now. Who would fund them?

We don't escape this atmosphere just by living in Oregon. Governor Kate Brown, reacting to the slaughter in Orlando, proposed some gun control legislation dealing with extended capacity magazines, allowing more than three days for a background check, and increasing the definition of domestic violence to include more than just family members. Kevin Starrett, Director of Oregon Firearms Federation, offered this—"It's just incredibly ignorant, stupid garbage that comes out of these people's mouths. The reason these people died was because they weren't prepared to protect themselves."

I wonder if Mr. Starrett's mix of egomania and belligerence is comforting to find in a gun owner.

I'm not sure that much would be accomplished in a meeting including Gov. Brown, Kevin Starrett, an Oregon Congressional delegation, and myself. Yet we all live here and we each have a vote.

(Don Vowell gets on his soapbox regularly in the *Keizertimes*.)

other views

stituency and also beyond the Republican Party. The same, to a lesser degree perhaps, can be said of Portman.

Gov. Susana Martinez of New Mexico would have been another obvious plus for Trump, who can use all the help he can get with both women and Latinos. But Trump chose to criticize Martinez's tenure as governor and, in any event, she had already signaled her uneasiness with him.

One could multiply the list of lost opportunities, but one of the biggest stories here is just how many Republicans have decided that their futures will be better served by staying away from Trump.

That left Pence as, in Gingrich's terms, the best "normal person" option. Pluses for Pence include strong ties to Capitol Hill (including a friendship with House Speaker Paul Ryan), an agreeable personality (a Democrat I know in Indiana who has tangled with Pence on issues sees him nonetheless as a nice-guy sort of politician), and an appeal to social conservatives.

But even that appeal is slightly compromised by Pence's flip-flopping on "religious liberty" legislation around gay weddings. As *The Washington Post's* Amber Phillips wrote in an excellent sketch of Pence, some conservatives "thought he backed off

last year's religious freedom debate under pressure from liberals."

And it says something about the doubts so many conservatives have about Trump and his need to appease them that he had to go to his right for a running mate. He could not turn instead to someone who might have broadened his appeal to middle-of-the-road voters. Trump received a fair share of the ballots of social-issue moderates in the northeast during the primaries. Those voters and moderate independents will not be reassured by Pence. In fact, social liberals will try to use Pence to tie Trump to the most conservative elements of the GOP.

So the verdict that Pence is probably the best Trump could do is double-edged.

Yes, Pence has experience; yes, he raised no obvious alarms; yes, he's from the Midwest, which is the focus of Trump's strategy; yes he's articulate (he's a former radio talk show host, after all); and yes, regular politicians will like him.

But Pence adds little to Trump's appeal outside the ranks of conservative ideologues. He does not win over voters who would like to think that Trump, under all his pirate-ness, is more moderate than he lets on. And he does not help build support in a swing state. If Trump is in trouble in Indiana, he's probably in trouble in a lot of other places that a, well, more normal Republican might be able to take for granted.

(Washington Post Writers Group)

gene h. mcintyre

more American troops to Iraq and into the greatest quagmire the world has ever seen. Perhaps ironically, but not incidentally, George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, Barack Obama and Joe Biden, among others, will be safe from harm the remainder of their lives at the expense of something like 310 million Americans who pay through the nose for their protection while not getting a lick of protection themselves. Further, the futility of fighting no-win wars in the Middle East reminds us that our country has not won a clear and lasting war-military victory since Victory over Japan in 1945.

At home, many former high-ranking American government officials predict that the same Muslim extremist actions already carried out in Paris, Nice and elsewhere are now being planned to take place here, wherever, that is, those dealers in death see an opportunity. We direly need to get busier than the current effort devoted to protecting all Americans, not just the few who are directly responsible for bringing whatever is to come to Americans at home, because if we don't we're going to duplicate the frustrated helplessness of French citizens.

Since the typical local police department and federal policing organizations have had their funds cut, resulting in reduced numbers of officers as the outcome, our federal

government should reduce some and close other American bases overseas and spend that money here: U.S. bases, which number in the hundreds overseas, have become redundant and obsolete for modern warfare while our federal government could reassign the money to beefing up security operations inside our country. Then, too, we desperately need men and women trained in the use of arms (without race-related stains on their service records) to replace those law enforcement officers who shoot black citizens with little or no provocation, turning our country into race warfare as has started and is underway today.

Hillary Clinton, like Obama, wants to be a do-gooder who opens our nation's doors to any and all Muslim refugees among whom we cannot know which of them have embraced a mission to kill infidels. Should Trump be elected we really don't know what he will do but it's fairly certain with his lack of political office-holding experience that he will depend on the GOP warring hawks set to lead him around by the nose while he also turns everything over to his kids' control.

Starting with Richard Nixon, our presidents always end their speeches with a "God Bless America." Hopefully, God, by all the imploring by our presidents in recent years to bless us, will divinely intervene to bring us a national savior as surely God recognizes how much we need one.

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

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