

KeizerOpinion

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I'm with her

I'm with her. Many are willing to define Hillary Clinton as lying, untrustworthy, criminal, etc. Much mud has been slung. Little has stuck. The most common lament is that we must choose the lesser of two evils in this presidential election. It's no contest. Hillary Clinton is indeed a politician, adjusting her positions as needed to suit both polls and the shift from primary to general election. But she is not Donald Trump.

The Democratic National Convention had many wonderful orators giving rousing and heartfelt speeches. The one that stuck with me was a simple interview on the floor of the convention with a woman named Betsy Ebeling. She has maintained a close friendship with Hillary Clinton since their grade school days in Park Ridge, IL. In January, Ebeling and about 50 of Hillary Clinton's high school classmates had traveled to Iowa to knock on doors on her behalf in the last days of the Iowa primary. Those who actually know her like her. There is no similar story for Donald Trump.

Betsy Ebeling doesn't see Hillary Clinton as conniving and untrustworthy. She has known her for over 50 years. When she witnessed some fresh-faced young man ask Hillary Clinton, on camera, what she would say to people who viewed her as a lying cheat, Betsy Ebeling was infuriated, both at the implication and the incivility. Besides, if you believe someone incapable of honest response, why ask anything?

Sometimes you can believe that where there's smoke there's fire. In this case it may be only smoke. The general narrative about Hillary Clinton has been gradually constructed from a relentless series of accusations and invective since she became First Lady in 1993. The opposition party began berating her for attempting to overhaul America's health care system and has never let up.

a box of soap

Where the use of private email servers was overlooked in Cabinet secretaries before Hillary Clinton there is now clamor for repeated investigations and charges.

Where the many attacks on American embassies and outposts were noted with gravity and sorrow in previous administrations, Ms. Clinton has endured at least seven investigations by hostile legislative committees for the attack in Benghazi. Those stalwarts grilling her were the same that had denied increased funding for embassy security. Hillary Clinton warned in 2012 that failure to increase security funding put embassies in politically volatile countries more at risk.

With all the cunningly timed and well publicized investigations they were not able to find real wrongdoing. It could be that these were the least competent investigative panels ever assembled or it could be that the investigations were initiated for the sole purpose of inflicting political damage.

So...before you join the chorus accusing Hillary Clinton of dishonesty be sure that you provide documentation and cite evidence. She has been advocating for children and people trapped in poverty since her college days. She has a long and extremely well documented history of service to this nation. President Obama said that no candidate has ever been more qualified to assume the Presidency.

If you believe that Donald Trump, Bernie Sanders, or Hillary Clinton can by themselves change the course of the nation you have forgotten that it is Congress that makes law; a group of very wealthy men past their pull date. The legislative branch, not content with impeding only the executive branch, now cripples the judiciary branch by refusing to confirm a judge. If it's change you want start with Congress.

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



Clinton's 'short-circuited' apology

By MICHAEL GERSON

One of the most unintentionally revealing moments of Hillary Clinton's campaign so far came during her recent, unconvincing explanation of the email affair: "I may have short-circuited it and for that I...ah ...you know, will try to clarify."

Most of the resulting ridicule has focused on the "short-circuited" portion of the statement, which seems a particularly gentle euphemism for prevarication. But it is the later portion of her quote that exposes a serious political disability: an ingrained, almost automatic recourse to guile.

The moment really should be watched in order to be properly appreciated. Clinton launches her sentence with, "I may have short-circuited it and for that" If this were an SAT question, the natural completion would be "... and for that I sincerely apologize." Clinton looks like she is headed in that direction, but stops herself. The result—"and for that I ... ah ... you know, will try to clarify."

Then she proceeds with the opposite of clarification: "I have acknowledged repeatedly that using two email accounts was a mistake. And I take responsibility for that. But I do think... having him [FBI Director James Comey] say that my answers to the FBI were truthful and then I should quickly add what I said was consistent with what I had said publicly. And that's really sort of, in my view, trying to tie both ends together."

The complexity of Clintonian knots is one reason that only 34 percent of American in a recent poll judge her "honest and trustworthy." In the email scandal we have seen deceptions used to cover deceptions; then a minimalist apology, filled with caveats,

other views

which themselves must be revised; and then a fuller apology, long after it appears cynical and forced.

It is amazing how many problems are caused, in politics and in life, by an inability to sincerely apologize.

I am not referring here to the harder and richer form of apology and forgiveness required, say, in post-genocide Rwanda or post-apartheid South Africa. In such cases, the public acceptance of guilt by wrongdoers, the expression of regret, the recognition of terrible harm, allow whole societies to affirm a new set of moral norms and begin the process of healing. I have met Rwandans who live peacefully on the same street with people who murdered their family members. Such forgiveness, when you encounter it, is heroic. It is, as political theorist Hannah Arendt argued, "the only reaction which does not merely re-act but acts anew and unexpectedly."

No, my concern is public apology in a normal, everyday political setting. Some people find the whole process to be bunk. But forgiveness is the only force that allows flawed men and women to change their minds and reconstruct their lives on firmer ground. It preserves the possibility of moral progress. For most of us, getting what we truly deserve—appealing to standards of justice alone—would not be pleasant. We know we should show forgiveness to others because we so often have need of it ourselves.

When an official makes a sincere apology, it can paradoxically improve

his or her public standing. The authentic admission of wrong involves a type of courage. It shows vulnerability and humanity.

The qualities that turn people into successful politicians—self-confidence, ambition, persistence, thick skin—seem to work against them in situations that require humility and genuine self-criticism. Those virtues, by any historical standard, are dramatically lacking in the 2016 presidential nominees.

Clinton seems to have drawn all the wrong lessons from a lifetime of scandal management. Her determination to avoid partisan scrutiny resulted in actions—keeping personal control of her emails and destroying a bunch of them—that have invited massive partisan scrutiny and confirmed pre-existing suspicions about her character.

The ritual of apology and forgiveness has an unavoidably moral root. It is "inextricably linked," according to theologian L. Gregory Jones, "to a commitment to change the behavior that would lead to a different way of life." A sincere apology can be redemptive. What Jones calls "spinning sorrow" is among the lowest of political acts.

When Clinton mouths the words, "I am sorry," and surrounds them with a thick cloud of self-justification, we are only convinced that she regrets being caught. Rather than making her look vulnerable and human, it makes her seem devious and supremely political. Does anyone really believe the Clinton way of politics has changed?

This is the American emergency: an acute shortage of public integrity at the highest level of our politics. (Washington Post Writers Group)

Councilor eyes a dedicated zip code

To the Editor:

Regarding: 97303: Keizer or Salem? Councilor eyes dedicated ZIP code (*Keizertimes*, Aug. 5):

Really? I mean, really? Who are the "we" in Councilor Marlene Parsons statement that "we want Keizer to have its own ZIP code?"

Why is she making this non-issue an issue?

Doesn't Councilor Parsons have something better and more productive to do with her time? This is coming about due to the United States Postal Service (USPS) pulling out an automated stamp machine from the post office? Really?

Will our quality of life improve with a dedicated ZIP code for Keizer? I think not.

Parsons' theory claims a dedicated ZIP code will be an additional means of attracting businesses to Keizer. Businesses looking to expand into a community analyze other data than simply relying on the demographics available from ZIP codes. Parsons thinks the numbers are skewed because the Keizer population is lumped in with northeast Salem. Sounds like there's a slur in there. Where's her data? Would our property taxes increase if we had a dedicated ZIP code? Hum, that definitely would not improve my quality of life.

She's taking up the time of State Rep. Bill Post on this non-issue. They want to take this to the legisla-

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ture to draft a resolution. The legislature already finds enough things to waste time and money on without taking this on. It still would have to be approved at the federal level. More waste of taxpayer money. Should this go to the voters? That definitely will cost a lot of money.

If, after all the effort of time and money, our ZIP code didn't change and 97303 was dedicated to Keizer, I suppose I could chalk it all up to another typical example of ineffective and wasteful government. On the other hand, if the ZIP code number did change, the time and money spent for Keizer residents and businesses to change address information on advertising, personal and business accounts, etc., will be more than annoying.

Buy your stamps at the bank ATM, Safeway or the North Salem Fred Meyer when you do your other shopping and banking.

Thanks, but no thanks. Leave me and my 97303 ZIP code alone.

If Parsons is so hung up on having an identifying ZIP code perhaps she should move to 90210 and leave the rest of us alone.

Myke Wabs Keizer

Share your opinion

Email a letter to the editor (300 words)

by noon Tuesday.

Email to: publisher@keizertimes.com

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Much ado about God bless America

Maybe I don't get out enough, but I'd never stumbled across any American newspaper writer who wrote an article to take exception with the use of the phrase, "God bless America." Turns out that that enduring expression is not off limits for at least one writer whose views find fault with its use by American politicians.

One of the main problems regarding the writer's concerns about "God bless America" is that its use has become a platitude. A platitude, as you probably remember from your vocabulary-learning school days, is defined as a remark or statement that has been used too often to be interesting or thoughtful.

Referencing facts, Irving Berlin originally penned the lyrics and wrote the music to *God Bless America* in 1918 but adjusted the song's lines in 1938 followed by songstress Kate Smith singing it for the first time as part of her Armistice Day broadcast on November 11, 1938. It was a glorious hit that made its way into the hearts of millions of Americans where it has resided ever since while the song's title, a kind of brief benediction you might say, is commonly used to end America's political speeches, usually, but not exclusively, those of U.S. presidents.

The writer of the newspaper piece *Why should 'God bless America?'* cites an author and college teacher, Donald K. Kraybill, who's known to be an Anabaptist, a person who believes that baptism must take place after a person's earned it, not when a person is a newborn baby. His Christian roots, too, are Anabaptist and the Protestant Revolution, dating back to the 1500s. Kraybill supports fundamentalist Christian views that do not allow the

gene h. mcintyre

use of scripture or any interpretation of it to be liberalized or casually used in what's believed by him, and those who believe along side

him, to be a bastardized platitudinous form.

According to advice from those who want the use of 'God bless America' to be a ubiquitous application, referencing every nation and all earthly beings, it is wrong to use the phrase exclusively in application to the U.S. and Americans. They do have a point as, after all, Berlin had lived through the First World War and was anticipating a world conflagration in 1938; so, he revised his 1918 version in hope the song might inspire all parties in the world to live in harmony. His wish, as we know, went unfulfilled.

Yet, the whole matter at issue in the article, *Why should 'God bless America?'* strikes me as rather silly and without justification as our nation was founded as a secular not ecclesiastical country and that condition protects us from radical impositions from those who don't like the way some of us conduct our lives and what we say in appreciation

of what we perceive as our blessings. In other words, those Americans who use 'God bless America' in any form should be applauded for loving their country not ridiculed because the use to which they put the phrase does not please America's religious zealots.

It's truly sad, even contemptuous, that a newspaper writer would reprimand anyone for how he uses the phrase God bless America. The phrase speaks for itself to represent what is finest in the United States: that we can believe whatever we wish to believe as our beliefs are preserved and protected in the U.S. Constitution. Further, God bless America encourages Americans to think positive thoughts about their land. Then, too, use of it can be of reassuring psychological value and mean a great deal to those whether religiously inclined or not do not go by the dictates of an evangelical Kraybill or his newspaper-writing surogate.

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

