

# KeizerOpinion

KEIZERTIMES.COM

## When there's no money

Several years ago this space called for the Keizer City Council to consider what the city would lose if the Herber property (informally called 'the cow pasture') was rezoned and that acreage was lost to development. A 112-unit apartment complex is proposed for that property. We haven't changed our minds, but reality has set in.

There is no public money available to purchase that land and add it to Claggett Creek Park which sits west of the bluff and the creek itself. There is no public money to maintain another sizable park—we can't keep up with the 19 parks already in the system.

The city council voted at this week's meeting to move ahead by directing city staff to write an ordinance for rezoning of the property. That unanimous decision will not sit well with the opponents of the planned apartment development. Over 100 Keizerites testified at a public hearing in June 2014, most who spoke then were against the apartments and spoke passionately about the green space, the cows the property's owners keep on the land and the two-story house that dates back to the 19th century.

The comments on the *Keizertimes* Facebook page about Monday's vote were almost solidly against the council's vote. There is no doubt the 'cow pasture' issue is the hot topic in town.

But the council's action on Monday has a caveat: the developers must allow up to 18 months for a party to come forward and relocate the house. Any interested party has a six month time line to express interest and then another twelve months to complete any move. Costs for such a move includes not only the expensive move but also a place to move it to.

To some the structure is just an old house that has seen better days; to others it is a part of Keizer's early history. But the house is the least of the arguments against any development there. Most opposed cite increased traffic and impact on local schools. Experts have testified that the area streets (in-

editorial

cluding the new roundabout at Chemawa Road and Verda Lane) can handle the increased traffic counts. Officials from the Salem-Keizer School District say the impact on the closest schools will be minimal.

Keizer's Department of Community Development and the city council had no wiggle room on the issue—they all had to address the proposed zoning changes based on current codes and laws. Council Kim Freeman stated at Monday's session, "I can't find fault" with the proposal after thanking the people who spoke about the issue over the past two years.

Some express the view that the council and city is driven by a desire for more tax revenue the development would produce. Some express views that the city is in the pockets of special moneyed interests. Those are views that are not borne out by the history of decisions the city and the council have made, though the sentiment is not hard to understand.

Keizer residents elect city councilors to do the public business of the people. The many citizens who have served as a city councilor over the past 33 years have taken their duties seriously and rely on the city staff to present clear options on any topic that comes up.

This council is following the rules our society has agreed to live under. The seven people currently serving do not want to tread on the rights of private property owners to do with their land as they see fit. It is government staying off the back of its citizens.

There is no money to buy the land for a park. There is no money to add amenities or maintain a park that size. The best option for those who don't want an apartment complex on that property and keep a green space with cows is to buy it themselves. Unless proponents of a green space have a few spare million dollars to purchase the land, it will have to defer to its elected representatives.

—LAZ

## The parade mural is done

To the Editor:

Keizer's first community mural is complete.

It is a beautiful piece of art for the city of Keizer to enjoy for many years to come. Keizer Art Association and its members greatly contributed to its completion.

Several members need attention: Kathy Haney, Nancy Erickson-Ward, Barbara Hunter, Shirlee Johnson, Wendy Lusby, Pat Matthews, Michelle DePlois, Merri Ann Randal, Lorna Sulgit, Brigitte Miller, Kathe Anderson, Julie Thorsen, Jessi Long and so many others.

The portraits are beautiful and greatly appreciated. The portrait class offered by Kathy Haney helped make the portraits possible. Jessi Long and Beth Melendy, were

letters

the paint team; both are also Keizer Public Art Commission members. The method and system setup were superb. There was little waste at the end of each day, both disposable and recyclable. The system to replicate

the mixed color was very effective. Thank you.

The young painters at the end and the hands below may be from future artists of Keizer. There are mural canvases left for sale. Again, thank you KAA and its members and all those that helped create the community mural.

Thank you Keizer Art Association, *Keizertimes* and the city of Keizer for making announcements concerning the Keizer Community Mural.

**Jill Hagen**  
Mural Project Coordinator



## Trump's tolerance of prejudice

By MICHAEL GERSON

Once upon a time, I thought the repudiation of white supremacists was the easiest layup shot in American politics. Not for the Trump campaign.

Asked recently whether he considered former KKK leader David Duke deplorable, vice presidential nominee Mike Pence said he was "not in the name-calling business." Earlier this year Donald Trump was posed a similar question and claimed, incredibly and repeatedly, "I don't know anything about David Duke." In a particularly revealing campaign moment, Trump was asked to repudiate the anti-Semitic death threats made by some of his followers against a reporter. "I don't have a message to the fans," Trump said.

The fans, no doubt, regard this as the gotcha game of a politically correct press. Even if this is true, an initial reluctance to condemn some of the very worst people in American politics conveys a message. Several years ago, researchers developed an Implicit Association Test -- a sort of computerized "blink test" measuring how subjects associate positive and negative words with people of different races. The immediate reaction of a politician to the KKK is a kind of political blink test. The right response is revulsion. And there has generally been a Grand Wizard exception to the prohibition on name-calling.

For a politician on the right, this is an entirely costless Sister Souljah moment. The repeated refusal to seize it conveys an impression of calculation. It indicates a strategy of no enemies to the right.

For some of us, this raises the hardest moral and emotional issue of the current campaign. The Republican

other views

nominee came to prominence feeding fears of Mexicans, migrants and Muslims. He refuses to engage in the normal moral

and political hygiene of repudiating extremism. I don't believe that anything close to half of Trump supporters are motivated by racism. But they are willing to tolerate a level of prejudice that should be morally unacceptable in a presidential candidate.

Why is this such a problem? Because racial prejudice is not one problem among many in American history. It is the sin that nearly destroyed us. It is a special category of wrong. It is not sufficient to say: I agree with Trump on 90 percent of the issues—on tax reform and energy policy and criminal justice issues—but dissent on the 10 percent involving systematic religious discrimination, forced expulsion, war crimes, the demonization of refugees and the general dehumanization of the other. These matters are foundational.

History has little sympathy for those who supported Stephen Douglas for his views on tariff policy or internal improvements while downplaying his belief that the rights of minorities should be determined by the majority. As Abraham Lincoln saw it, America fought at Gettysburg and Antietam over the most basic questions—how to define the protections and promise of a great republic, as well as the duties we owe to each other as human beings. This remains the central issue of politics—the source of its nobility when it serves human dignity,

and a source of dishonor when it reflects baser motives. It is not possible to build the greatness of this nation—this shining example in the conscience of humanity—while forgetting or undermining its deepest ideals.

A refusal to aggressively confront a racially tinged extremism has been taken as a source of validation by white nationalists. They feel emboldened. Duke reports being "overjoyed" that Trump has embraced "most of the issues I've championed for years." No presidential candidate is responsible for the views of all their supporters. But at least since the 1960s, conservative leaders have felt a responsibility to actively oppose and discredit those elements of the right that identify Americanism with ethnic purity and spin conspiracy theories of Semitic control. Opposing these longstanding tendencies of right-wing nationalism is part of what conservative intellectual and political leadership has meant for decades. The current vacuum of such leadership at the top of the Republican ticket is taken as a cultural signal by both the perpetrators and objects of prejudice.

Or so I would argue. Other Republicans I know and like find my viewpoint morally problematic, because it helps enable the election of Hillary Clinton and the nomination of liberals to the Supreme Court, which would result in irreparable harm to the country. It is a dispute causing a crisis of self-definition among conservatives, straining and rupturing friendships across the movement. That is another legacy of Donald Trump, who will be known for the wounds he leaves behind.

(Washington Post Writers Group)

## Protests during national anthem

It's been done by the same guy in past years and he's back at it again this NFL season, now being joined by other pro-football players, athletes in other sports and even some high school teams. Their protest, by sitting, kneeling or raising fists during the national anthem, is intended to bring attention to what they view as wrongdoing against African-Americans and other minorities in the U.S. Whatever the case, this action has brought out many Americans for and against the protest: those against view it as disrespectful to our flag; others accept it as free speech allowed by the First Amendment.

*The Star-Spangled Banner* had its origin in a poem written by Francis Scott Key in 1814, after he witnessed the bombardment of Fort Mchenry by British ships of the Royal Navy in Baltimore Harbor during the War of 1812. *The Star-Spangled Banner* was recognized for official use by the U.S. Navy in 1889, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson in 1916, and made the national anthem by congressional resolution on March 3, 1931. Before 1931, other songs served as the hymns of American officialdom, including *Hail, Columbia, My Country Tis of Thee* and *America the Beautiful*.

In the span of my own lifetime, and presuming most Americans alive today, whenever we've been to a ball game of most any kind we've heard the announcer say, "Ladies and gentlemen, please rise and remove your caps for singing of the national anthem." This instruction has been simply accepted for a number of years although not that long ago it

gene h. mcintyre

wasn't the custom it has become. So, after Colin Kaepernick and his band of fellow athletes now

not standing or following the instructions of old, I asked myself how did it happen that this practice was adopted.

In Tacoma's historic district, across from the Pantages Theater, is a plaque that honors Rosell G. O'Brien, an Irish immigrant who was born in Dublin in 1846 which happens to be a year during which the potato famine ravished many an Irish family and may have had a lot to do with the fact that O'Brien decided on a life in the U.S.

Like many immigrants of old who came to America, O'Brien apparently was determined to show his patriotism to his adopted country. At the age of 16 he joined an Illinois infantry and fought in the U.S. Civil War. By war's end in 1865, he had achieved Brigadier General status.

After the war he relocated to the Washington Territory. According to his biographer, John Keane, O'Brien became clerk of the Washington State Supreme Court, mayor of Olympia and first commander of the National Guard of Washington Territory.

O'Brien's fame resulted from what he did at the Bostwick Hotel in Tacoma on October 18, 1893. At a meeting of the local chapter of a national Civil War veterans, O'Brien stood and made a motion, proposing that "People should rise and re-

move their hats, if they were not in the military, and stand at attention for the playing of any of the national anthems." The motion passed, and, within a couple of years, the custom had been adopted nationwide and Congress made it part of official United States Code.

I cannot recall in my entire life, having attended a gathering of any kind where *The Star-Spangled Banner* was played, that any American I knew sat through it, raised a fist or knelt on one knee. Doing that sort of thing is not something that will get a person arrested but it surprises this writer that so many young athletes will join the instigator by this form of protest.

But what I'd most like to know is why this group, too often overpaid, overindulged and over-idolized professional athletes, apparently prefers protest rather than applying their energy volunteering to help black youth or participating in making improvements to black neighborhoods. Instead, they perform grandstanding acts, drawing attention to themselves and serving mostly to aid our nation's enemies who are always looking to enjoy that which divides us.

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

### Share your opinion

Email a letter to the editor (300 words) by noon Tuesday.

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