

KeizerOpinion

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The improbable president

He could never win the Republican presidential nomination. The country would never elect him to the highest office in the land and make him the most powerful person in the world.

The morning after the election proved that in the end, polls, pundits and media were all wrong. Donald J. Trump defied all the odds and defeated Hillary Clinton to become America's 45th president.

Trump had his finger on the pulse of middle America—he understood and gave voice to their frustration, anger and anxiety. Now he has ridden that frustration and anger right into the Oval Office. He is the most improbable person ever to be elected to the presidency.

The president-elect did not present an agenda or a set of policies. He has a free hand in policies he'd push for because he didn't outline any during the campaign. What he said he wants to do is build a wall on the border with Mexico to keep our undocumented immigrants who come here to live off the nation's largess and take jobs from Americans.

He proposes a ban on Muslims from certain areas of the world. He wants to deport millions of undocumented immigrants. He wants to cut taxes for the wealthy. He wants to rip up or renegotiate trade deals and treaties.

A President Trump won't have carte blanche to carry out his plans but he will have a Republican con-

editorial

trolled Congress to ease the way.

The American democratic system worked. The country elected a leader and we will see a peaceful transfer of power from one party to the other. Our system allows people to say and write what they will about their support or scorn for the leaders of the land. Hillary Clinton supporters are understandably dispirited over the election's results. Trump supporters and Republican are ecstatic.

The country is badly divided politically and culturally. We have to take Trump at his word that he wants to unify a country he helped cleave. He wishes to be the president of all Americans. Hillary Clinton set the right tone at her concession speech on Wednesday morning when she called on her supporters to accept that Trump would be president and to give him a chance to lead with an open mind.

Though Trump did not win an overwhelming mandate, he did win the election. On January 20, 2017 he will become our president and we must give him his due as the victor. Our country is a nation of checks and balances. The people spoke on Tuesday, they have another chance to speak in 2018 and again for president in 2020.

Just as many were surprised by his victory, we may be surprised by what he actually does once he's in office.

—LAZ

Start small

By ERIC A. HOWALD

When Matthew Boger stepped out from behind a curtain at Los Angeles' Museum of Tolerance, my reporter brain went into overdrive.

I was on a retreat with coworkers and Matthew was the first person to greet us as we arrived. He seemed a warm, amicable and sincere person. To me, nothing stood out about him in particular aside from the notion that he might be gay.

A day later, museum organizers put us in a dark room and cued up a video. In the opening moments, the camera is taken on a jog down a darkened street and the viewer hears Matthew's voice telling us how he got up to run away, but his pursuers caught up to him in an alley.

He was beaten severely by a group of men for the crimes of being homeless, in the wrong place at the wrong time, and gay.

Fortunately, Matthew survived the encounter and worked his way out of homelessness. Eighteen years later, in 1998, Matthew heard about a gay 21-year-old being beaten to death in Wyoming, an attack motivated by hate.

He decided soon after that he wanted to find a place where he could use his voice in support of others. It wasn't long before he was volunteering at the Museum of Tolerance.

At the same time, another LA resident, Tim Zaal, was experiencing his own epiphany. Tim was a white supremacist with a lengthy record that included being charged with a hate crime.

Tim's son had learned to say the N-word and "Heil Hitler" around the same time he was learning "mommy" and "daddy." Tim decided that what his son was learning from him needed to change. He started volunteering at the Museum

moments of lucidity

of Tolerance.

At some point, Matthew and Tim ended up working on the same project, and sharing their reasons for volunteering at the museum. By that point in the video, most of us were fairly certain

where it would lead, but the twist still hit like a sucker punch: Tim had led the assault on Matthew more than 20 years prior.

After a lot of work and effort — including apologies and acceptance — they are still lecturing side-by-side about their convergent paths.

After the credits rolled, Matthew came out from behind the curtain, talked about his experience and told us he would answer a few questions.

I keep questions on hand like other people keep lip balm or tissues, and I was cycling through them at warp speed. I felt honored when he finally called on me, after I settled on four words: How did you start?

It wasn't much to go on, but Matthew figured it out.

"I started small," he said. "I asked him how his day was going, or what his plans were and we were able to build on that."

It's nearly 4 a.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 9, 2016. The morning after Election Day.

I can't sleep, or I won't permit myself that small mercy. It's as though I want to deny myself long enough that I can deem it sufficient punishment for being delusional and misguided. It's never felt so naïve to want a little more unity, a bit of cooperation, or an ounce of empathy.

But Matthew's words are on my mind. Tomorrow ... today ... soon, I'm going to try to start small.

To view the video described in this column, go to bit.ly/2fxQFn (Eric A. Howald is managing editor of the *Keizertimes*.)

Astronomy and the US debt

To the Editor:

Numbers in astronomy are astronomical; the U.S. debt is in the same category. There are approximately 300 billion stars in our galaxy. It would take about 100,000 years, at the speed of light, to cross it. It is estimated there are 100 billion galaxies in the observable universe. Billions used to be extremely large numbers—now lost in the shadow of trillions by our national debt.

Our national debt is currently \$19.8 trillion. The federal budget deficit was \$480 billion in 2015, nearly \$167,00 for every taxpayer. The government spent half a trillion more dollars than it took in?

Here is a perspective: if you transpose dollars to seconds and go back in time 1 million seconds it would

12 days earlier. Go back one billion seconds and you end up back in time almost 32 years. If you go back one trillion seconds you go back more than 31,000 years. If you go back 20 trillion seconds you are at approximately 600,000 B.C.

Distances in astronomy and the speed of light are unattainable and don't affect our daily lives here in America. But the national debt in the trillions of dollars will bring the U.S. economy to a screeching halt.

John P. Rizzo
Keizer

Share your opinion

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

Email to:

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The all-Trump election

By DEBRA J. SAUNDERS

Let me tell you about my life since Donald Trump won the Republican primary. I voted against Trump in June because of his history as an unreliable conservative and longtime supporter of big government. I voted for Libertarian Gary Johnson in the general election. Yet I have had this dark presence that has shadowed me. Wherever I have gone, I have been put in the position of explaining or defending Trump by people who saw it as my duty to denounce The Donald.

On the radio and in speaking appearances, it has fallen to me to explain to Bay Area audiences why someone who is not a complete idiot would vote for Trump. I can only assume that my questioners don't know any Trump voters — other than relatives they must endure over cocktails during holidays.

To mention that Trump was preferable on regulation, Obamacare or the U.S. Supreme Court was to invite scorn. How dare anyone conjure up issues when Trump's rhetoric is so divisive?

I've watched countless hours of cable news, during which reporters grilled Republicans about whether they would vote for Trump in No-

other views

ember. Never once did I see a reporter demand that Democrats disclose whether they would vote for Clinton,

even though she had set up homebrew servers for State Department emails and then deleted thousands of those emails after they were under subpoena.

All you heard was nagging about Trump, Trump, Trump.

On panels, it has been my job to watch liberals excoriating Trump as a racist, sexist bigot. It never occurred to these fine fellows that American voters might support him. Sure, they winked, he won the Neanderthal GOP primary, but he could never win the popular vote. His appeal, they knew, was limited to angry white men who didn't go to college.

I was wrong, too. I thought Trump most likely would lose and also that he could cost Republicans control of the Senate. I believed the polls.

San Francisco sure believed those polls. How many times did I watch Democrats agree that it would be better if Clinton won big? As Chris

Lehane, a former aide to Al Gore and now a lobbyist for Airbnb, told the San Francisco Chronicle editorial board, if Clinton won big, Republicans would have to face reality. If the election were tight, on the other hand, both sides would learn nothing and just go back to their corners.

I did not agree. A big win for Clinton would justify her bad decisions and her grabby ways. As I write this and Trump seems poised to win the Electoral College, I don't think many Democrats are hoping that Trump wins really big — for the good of the country.

I remain dubious about whether Trump is up to the job of president. On the other hand, it is possible that winning the White House will humble Trump and make him a better man. Whereas with Clinton, we know that power corrupts.

Here's where the media really got it wrong. Most people in the press never thought Clinton's baggage would hurt her chances. Me, I thought Hillary Clinton would be a terrible president. And guess what. So did a huge chunk of American voters.

(Creators Syndicate)

Can the Crystals honor more than 13 a year?

gene h. mcintyre

There are close to 5,000 employees who work for the Salem-Keizer School District, so it comes as an annual surprise when such a very tiny number of them are given special recognition by way of the Crystal Apple Award. Surely, with all the millions upon millions of dollars spent through taxation here in the effort to provide a public education to thousands upon thousand of local children there would be more among those employed than the 13 in 2016 recognized as outstanding.

Since the psychology of honoring only 13 is so negative one would think that special consideration would be given to the hardworking, dedicated and often relatively low paid among all those district employees. Most certainly it would seem more fitting if each school, elementary, middle and high, held an annual event giving recognition to everyone who works there. Perhaps a small budgeted amount could be set aside to be used by each school's parent group to cater a luncheon or dinner to honor all who work there. Perhaps next year, instead of the superintendent receiving a huge salary increase for nothing deserving it except keeping up with other districts' superintendents pay, that money could be spent to give the many other employees something to honor them.

Further, the choice of persons to receive a Crystal Apple are apparently chosen based on the most subjective and random of criteria. Are these people honored because they provided special enrichment to the lives of the children in our schools or is it because they did something, or many things, special for the person or persons who nominated

them? Then, from the several more nominated, how is it that a mere handful find their way to the top of

the heap? Again, it's surmised to be so politically personal as to be distastefully repugnant and disrespectful to everyone else.

My wife and I attended a Crystal Apple Award ceremony about a dozen years ago. We noticed in the first place that it was rather costly to purchase the tickets and that most

likely many another interested person or family in this community would find it too expensive just to show up. Then, too, from the standpoint of people dressed to the "nines," some in tuxedos and evening gowns, how many among us can afford the necessary attire to show up and be generally accepted as dressed appropriately for the occasion. It seemed mainly to be an event where the district's well-heeled power elites could strut their stuff and make a power statement. We decided we wouldn't attend another one.

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

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