

# KeizerOpinion

KEIZERTIMES.COM

## Malheur Refuge standoff taught us about a few things

Ammon Bundy, quoted on his acquittal of charges in the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge armed occupation, expressed amazement that anyone could fail to take the side of the “people” instead of the government. Ideally, government is of the people, by the people, and for the people. I am both people and part of the government.

a box of soap

revenue or territorial domain. Personal ownership of land is actually a fairly recent concept in human history and even then has enough restrictions so that it is more accurate to say that I have rights to the land on which I live than to say I own it. I don't have absolute freedom to use my small piece as I see fit. I am subject to zoning law, must pay taxes, am liable for lawsuits brought against the property and must abide by restrictions agreed on by the community in which I live, not to mention the state's right of eminent domain.

I had nothing to do with the creation of the land on which I live, no say in what happened here 50 years ago, and 50 years from now no one will remember my claim to ownership. Wildlife conservation pioneer Aldo Leopold said, “We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect”

At our current rate of setting aside about 10 percent of land for wildlife habitat we stand to lose about half of all species in the near future. Still, that 10 percent is in jeopardy from the Ammon Bundy mindset. If control of federal lands is handed to those who live nearest to it will they decide in favor of reducing operating costs over giving migratory birds a place to feed and rest? Your answer is found in the ongoing decline of species. Author Paul Brooks was more blunt: “In America today you can murder land for private profit. You can leave the corpse for all to see, and nobody calls the cops.”

If only that were an exaggeration. (Don Vowell gets on his soapbox regularly in the *Keizertimes*.)

I also own a share of the Malheur NWR equal to Ammon Bundy's. I spend a lot of time at wildlife refuges and have traveled to spend time at Malheur. Teddy Roosevelt's generation understood the value of protecting habitat for wildlife and bird migration. We owe them a debt of gratitude and a sense of responsibility in leaving it be. We ought to share the same commitment to our children.

Much of the land in the West was either purchased or taken by the United States for expansion and then turned over to states and individuals in land grants and homesteading provisions. Free use of much of the unclaimed land was allowed by the U.S. government. Much of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land is now leased for cattle grazing, mineral and oil extraction. A fair portion of the revenue gained from these leases is returned to the states involved. It is estimated that granting local control to the states encompassing these federal lands would increase administrative costs without solving the questions of usage.

The Ashanti Tribe of Ghana has a saying: “Land belongs to a vast family of whom many are dead, a few are living and a countless host are still unborn.” That seems a nice recognition that Earth is a common heritage.

It looks like a road to ruin to see land as only a vehicle for increasing

## A needed inspirational message

To the Editor:

I am sharing this message from a friend, Bret Oldham, with all my Facebook friends. This is precisely what I had in mind to inform to the citizens of America.

I used to coach basketball and was very successful at it. One of the reasons for that success was due to the absolute team mindset that I instigated. Everything was accomplished as a team with each individual doing their part. There was no fighting between the team members. Everyone wanted the same thing; they wanted the team to be successful. This simple analogy is a small example of what is needed now in this country.

We are all Americans. Like it or not we must all be on the same team. Not any political team; the American team. We must stop antagonizing the division that is rampant across this great nation. Stop boasting if your side won in the election. Stop being bitter if your side didn't win. Stop bashing each other. Stop the hate. We need unity among all citizens at this delicate time in our country's history. No matter what your political beliefs are, your religious beliefs are, your race, your sexuality, or your financial status, at the end of the day we are all still Americans. Our diversity is what has made this country the most powerful nation on earth. Please remember, united we stand, divided we fall. It's not always easy but let's all try a little harder to accept each other's differences. Let's get back on the right path and start making a concerted effort to be kind to each other. It all starts with you.

Bret Oldham  
Keizer

letters

## Veterans Day 2016

To the Editor:

I sit here looking out the window at the American flag, with tremendous pride. It is impossible not to have a heavy heart over watching rioters burn that same flag. Watching protesters vandalize buildings, cars, and blocking traffic, preventing working people from getting to or from home, to work, to pick up the kids. All under the guise of “their rights.”

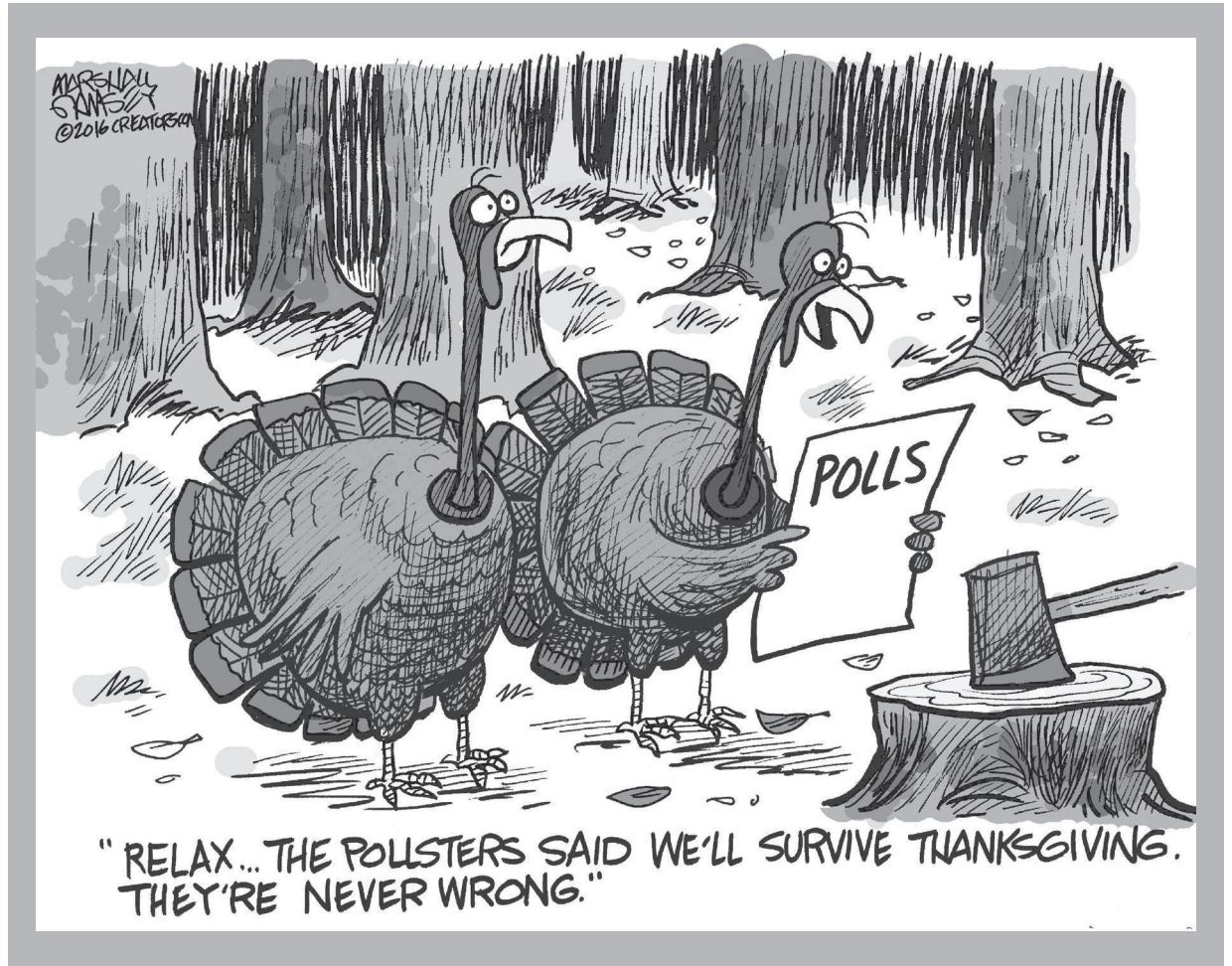
In 1944, 18-year-olds stormed Normandy. Many gave their lives to protect a free world, to give us the freedoms we have today. Today we have 18-year-olds staging “cry-ins” on colleges campuses because they didn't get their way. Therapy dogs being brought in to help them grieve, college professors weeping over a lost election, making exams “optional” while students grieve.

Should it be any surprise that high school students walk out in protest given the brain washing they have experienced from teachers like this?

Some parents have been complaining for years, about a leftist agenda that has been in control of our public schools. No surprise at the increases in enrollment in private schools. Look at the proliferation of private/church schools in the valley.

Have we become a society that teaches our youth “you have the right to have anything you want whether earned it or not?”

G.I. Wilson  
Keizer



## A triumphant GOP, mired in crisis

By MICHAEL GERSON

The Republican Party is everywhere triumphant—House and Senate, executive and legislative, national and state—and yet faces a series of crises.

There is a crisis of identity. Trump now leads a coalition including the Republican establishment—and people who despise the Republican establishment. The insurgent president-elect—lacking relevant experience, adequate personnel and actual policy proposals—cannot exercise power without the help of those he ridiculed.

Trump has chosen to incorporate this conflict into the structure of the West Wing. His chief of staff, Reince Priebus, was the sponsor of the 2013 Republican autopsy report, which called on the party to accommodate America's multicultural future. Trump's chief strategist, Steve Bannon, has made a career out of resisting that future. This is less a team of rivals than an ideological cage fight.

Every good presidential transition should involve betraying a few of your friends. Not everyone who helps a president to become president is fit to help him govern. Bannon—whose Breitbart News invited the alt-right into the conservative mainstream and who has made a business model out of spreading conspiratorial nonsense—belongs in this category, along with Sarah Palin, Rudy Giuliani, Corey Lewandowski and the rest of the distracting campaign sideshow.

For the Republican Party, this is also a governing crisis. Trump won office promising to undo globalization, bring back manufacturing jobs and fulfill “every dream you ever dreamed.” So expectations are pretty high. But Trumpism, for the most part,

other views

consists of cultural signals and symbolic goals, not a set of developed proposals.

Many Republican members of

Congress are frankly confused. Are they supposed to follow Trump's lead or supply his agenda? He has embraced massive infrastructure investment, but there is no favored bill or detailed plan. Obamacare must go, but what approach to “replace” does Trump prefer? Speaker Paul Ryan is pushing for tax reform. Does the president-elect have any interest in the topic at all? The biggest frustration reported by Republicans who have met with Trump is his inability to focus for any period of time. He is impatient with facts and charts and he changes the subject every few minutes. Republican leaders need policy leadership, or permission to provide it themselves.

One area where the agenda is unifying and well developed concerns the reversal of Obama-era executive orders. Republican lawyers have spent the last year and a half working in study groups on reversal language, in order to be ready on the first day of a GOP presidency. The action most likely to cause controversy would overturn President Obama's limited amnesty for students brought illegally to America as children. Most Republicans think that executive order was illegal; but most Americans will probably find the victims of reversing the order to be sympathetic.

This hints at the long-term political crisis faced by the triumphant

GOP. Trump won the presidency in a manner that undermines the GOP's electoral future. He demonstrated that the “coalition of the ascendant”—including minorities, millennials, and the college-educated—is not yet ascendant. But in a nation where over half of babies under 5 years old are racial and ethnic minorities, it eventually will be. Trump was elected by a 70 percent white electorate. But that was about 2 percentage points lower than in the 2012 election—and that number has been dropping by about 2 points each presidential election for decades. Trump's white turnout strategy is not the wave of the future; it is the last gasp of an old and disturbing electoral approach.

The final crisis faced by the GOP, and just about everyone else, relates to the quality of our political culture. Trump won office in a way that damaged our democracy. He fed resentment against minorities, promised to jail his opponent and turned shallow invective into an art form. If he governs as he campaigned, Trump will smash the unity of our country into a thousand shards of bitterness.

We should hope that the president-elect will be sobered by the responsibilities of high office and discovers hidden resources of charity (even though malice has been the habit of a lifetime). He deserves the space at least to try. But Republicans may end up depending on a younger generation of leaders—Paul Ryan, Ben Sasse, Nikki Haley, Tim Scott, Jeff Flake, Marco Rubio—to demonstrate the possibility of unifying aspiration and civil disagreement. And that would lay the foundation for a lasting and honorable victory. (Washington Post Writers Group)

## No to corporate taxes, yes to big salaries

Consider *incongruous*. It's a fancy word meaning something is not consistent with what is logical.

Further, consider the following information that was made available in the media a few days ago. The University of Oregon's trustees last week approved a contract extension for men's basketball coach Dana Altman that will pay him \$18.45 million through April, 2023. Altman will earn a base salary of \$1.8 million this season and is due a retention \$850,000 bonus this spring at the end of the contract's first year. Altman's the fifth highest paid coach in the Pac-12 while his new deal places him among the nation's top 20 highest paid coaches. The work he does manages a sports event named basketball, there's no life or death involved.

Altman has taken Ducks basketball to play in the national tournament but did not finish as national champions. Meanwhile, Ducks football head coach, Mark Helfrich was a winner for a couple of years but this year has been the coach of a team that has lost more than half of its games. He's already been paid millions of dollars for his coaching work; however, should he be fired due to lack of support for him due to this year's dismal record, he nevertheless will receive \$11.6 million.

Altman and Helfrich are not unusual for the amounts of remuneration they receive along with perks that add up to tens of thousands of dollars every year. All sports at UO, OSU, Portland State and other public institutions in the state are paid huge amounts for coaching

gene h. mcintyre

games that are simply provided for entertainment's sake. Yet, these coaches salaries and perks, while advertised as being paid by generous alums and game revenues, student fees and tax dollars get manipulated to help with the huge coach salaries paid.

Then there's the voting down of Measure 97. Measure 97 would have required the many national corporations that do business in Oregon to pay a higher tax on the profits they make in our state. When you think of what the revenue estimated to have been \$6 billion over the next biennium, you begin to realize that since all that money would not have gone to life and death actions, much of it would as it was intended to help those without health insurance and the welfare of Oregon's senior citizens and helped many more kids in school to graduate and provide much more vocational and technical courses of study and learning.

So, getting to the bottom line on this issue, collectively, we Oregonians are willing to pay coaches lavish salaries and perks only known to CEOs and executives in major corporations but we're not willing to require those corporations that make the big bucks in our state to pay their fair share in taxes that mean so much more than watching young men and women get broken bones, concussions and life-long injuries. It's all very incongruous. (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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