

KeizerOpinion

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Take the lead on ride-hailing

Economic models are being thrown on the slag heap of history as technology changes the way we live and work.

Social media has revolutionized communications. Every new discovery and service brings their own rewards and challenges. The way we work has changed and will continue to evolve. The way we move around is changing, as much as a result as technology and life changes.

Public transportation in our area does not have wide support, most of us still opt for our private vehicles which means many car trips with only one person. Some complain that public buses don't have a schedule or a route that works in their lives, especially when there is no late evening or weekend service.

For those who do retain their driving habit the complaint veers toward traffic in general—too much of it, too slow, other drivers. Traffic continues to be one of the top livability issues of local residents.

Add all of that with the fact that younger people are not as hyped to get their drivers license and a car as earlier generations.

This gives the city of Keizer a chance to be a leader by allowing ride-hailing services to operate in the city. Salem's incoming mayor Chuck Bennett wants to see Uber and Lyft start to operate in his city. Let Keizer be the leader on this issue (Mayor Cathy Clark has been a strong voice in all things transportation for years)—let Keizer set the standard for how services such as Uber operate.

Allowing ride-hailing services in Keizer (and Salem) would help people get where they need to go when they want to go. Things might be different if votes in the Salem Area Transit district approved bonds and

levies to expand and improve bus service in our region. Barring that local municipalities must take steps to help their citizens move around according to contemporary models. Approving ride-hailing services offers the public an alternative to their current choices of transportation.

The first step is for the city to find out how Uber and Lyft operate and how they can be profitable here. Cities of every size across the country have had policy discussions regarding these services including issues such as liability, permitting and licensing. Keizer has a little-used licensing ordinance for taxis; there is not much call for taxis now because wait times are unacceptable to some riders, primarily because cabs come from bases in Salem.

A former mayor once said that Keizer is open for business. If that is still viable, let us open it for all businesses. Let us tell Uber and Lyft that Keizer is a good market for them. In the current *Keizertimes* web poll, more than 70 percent of respondents would use a ride-hailing service. That's a great start.

Ride-hailing services in Keizer would be good for students, for people with appointments in or outside of the city boundaries, for those not able to drive and for those who want to attend a social function where alcohol is served.

We call for Keizer to take the regional lead on this issue and create the model that other cities can follow. We want to see this move forward with the fewest obstacles as possible.

Our city is open for business. The way people move around is changing. Those are two things Keizer can address with one leap forward: let's hail a ride.

—LAZ

editorial



Will Trump let Obama go quietly?

By E.J. DIONNE JR.

Will Donald Trump deprive President Obama of what we have come to think of as a normal post-presidency, the relatively serene life of reflection, writing, philanthropy and high-minded speeches to friendly audiences?

In recent decades, we have become accustomed to the idea of ex-presidents who leave political combat behind. They might occasionally speak out on behalf of their party: Bill Clinton was an effective “explainer in chief” for Obama at the 2012 Democratic National Convention. But with some exceptions (Jimmy Carter on the Middle East comes to mind), they usually avoided trying to influence policy. In their above-the-fray roles, former commanders in chief sometimes improved their standing in the polls. George W. Bush is a prominent example of the less controversy/more affection dynamic.

It is already clear that Obama, leaving office at a young 55, intends to pursue something more than the quiet life. He will lay down some preliminary markers on policy next week in a Farewell Address. He has signaled that he wants to energize a new generation of Democrats and help rebuild a party that he will leave in less than optimal shape. Democrats control neither the House nor the Senate and have seen their share of governorships and state legislative seats decimated.

He has already lined up to work with Eric Holder, his former attorney general, to help Democrats in guber-

natorial and legislative races. Their goal is to fight Republican gerrymanders by influencing the drawing of congressional district boundaries after the 2020 census.

And it would be good to see Obama visit Appalachia and the old factory towns and cities where Trump did well to connect with white working-class voters who have soured on progressive politics.

But Obama could be pushed toward a larger role if Trump proves to be as profound a threat as his opponents fear. It may fall to the president of hope and change to become the national spokesman for opposition and even resistance on civil liberties, civil rights, press freedom, the rights of immigrants and religious minorities, and the United States' standing in the world.

A largely offstage but lively debate is already unfolding over Obama's coming role. In one view, Obama should recede and allow new voices in his party to take the lead. The Democrats' path back to power, this argument goes, will best be blazed by a younger generation that can declare its independence from the politics of the past—exactly what Obama himself did in 2008.

A related argument sees Obama as inciting a negative reaction if he becomes too vocal, too quickly. Even if the apolitical post-presidency has rather shallow historical roots, it has

become something of a norm that Obama ought to be careful about challenging.

But these qualms might be most useful as a guide to how and when Obama *should* engage. In the unlikely event that Trump governs in a more moderate way, Obama's activism might not be necessary. And even if Obama's voice is needed to rally dissent, it would be a mistake for him to jump into the debate too quickly. His witness should be seen as an emergency measure, the actions of a leader who could not sit by while his country was in peril.

Obama can take risks in confronting Trump that more conventional politicians, with their futures ahead of them, might not. He has the capacity to seize the country's attention on the issues that matter. Here, the accustomed behavior of ex-presidents could work in Obama's favor. His fellow citizens would see him as speaking out reluctantly and despite his desire to move on to a new phase in his life.

He would have to calibrate his interventions. He doesn't want to become a daily commentator on all things political. But his popularity as he departs and the record he leaves behind on job creation and growth give him added credibility with a broad swath of Americans.

My hunch is that Obama would prefer to hang back from politics. My expectation is that Trump will not give him that option.

(Washington Post Writers Group)

other views

Electoral college serves a purpose

To the Editor:

Gene McIntyre started his column (*An equation for disaster?* Dec. 30, 2016) with the wrong premise.

Alexander Hamilton and others created the Electoral College so states with low populations wouldn't be left out of the process. If they hadn't created the College, a few large states could control all national elections. For that reason alone the Constitution would most likely not have been ratified. As for his totally biased remarks about Trump, who knows? Many of us had serious concerns when

letters

an inexperienced neighborhood organizer and party hack was elected. We didn't disavow our country or the Constitution.

The election is over. It was constitutional. Give the president-elect a chance. That is an equation for Democracy.

Kent McCurdy
Keizer

Share your opinion

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

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Supporting our local teams is in our DNA

Why do I care about the fate of any sports team? Why do I consider the teams “my” teams? I have no impact on or personal reward from the outcome of any game my favorites play. For the sake of transparency here, my favorites are the University of Oregon Ducks and Seattle Seahawks. Meanwhile, what's most silly? I feel temporarily upset when either one loses and get a boost when they win.

I have talked to friends about this phenomenon and they've not been much help. Some say they've just always been a fan of so and so. They've attended a college or grew up in a certain city, say, for example, with an NFL team. Their dad liked that team so it's an emotional inheritance. Whatever the answer, it is always vague and imprecise; in other words, they do not really know why, but just feel something and carry it like a crucible in team colors.

But what is it? Where does it come from? What purpose does it serve? I soberly recognize the irrationality of identifying with a team I never played on, such as the Ducks, although I did earn graduate degrees at UO but as an older student, and would have viewed myself mad if I'd traveled to Seattle for a try-out, even forty years ago when I was still a young guy with a flat tummy.

According to the anthropologists, there's a connection. As long ago as the Middle Ages, peasants played a version of soccer while villages competed with each other, kicking a pig's bladder around for scores. Games took place at carnivals, festivals and gatherings of all kinds with feasting, dancing and physical activity in which, most likely, every able-bodied person participated. These sorts of human interactions took place throughout the world, in primitive and so-called advanced societies, as far back as early man—it got into our DNA, in ways scientific and

artistic, and stuck there.

I may understand it better now than as a child. However, once I played on teams then it became natural to enthusiastically support the effort. Even

kids who never participated in a sport, like most of the girls when I was young, they showed their support by cheering for the boys they knew. We simply grew up with the habit of supporting school teams and it followed us into adulthood and life thereafter

even though, nowadays, most of us do not personally know those for whom we root.

Hence, an additional dimension to this subject that can further mystify the questioning mind. Sports in the United States have become unattached from the fans who support them to a point where it is challenging to understand why anyone can cheer for a team. Players and owners take fan loyalty for granted and give back only wins and losses with evermore super-

fans, mega-fans, fans who yell louder and spend more on tickers and merchandise. Team member indifference perplexes but the craziness goes on while the professional players have contracts and are paid whether they win or lose. They build it and we come.

In trying to figure it all out to a definitive answer, logic fails me. I recognized that powerful, illogical human emotions are involved. The widespread phenomenon has most to do with our being human. I don't appreciate the disgustingly excessive money in sports, amateur and professional (a moral nation would provide food and shelter for its youth in poverty before paying grown men millions to play with a “pigskin”), but that equation has favored the games over my lifetime. I want to say that my New Year's resolution is to back off of interest in sports teams but know I'll fail that commitment as there is an instinctive, powerful force at work, something bigger than me, seeking human social belonging and membership.

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

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