

KeizerOpinion

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Call it a day for EDC

Is it time to put a stake through the heart of the city's Economic Development Commission?

The commission, established by the Keizer City Council in 2014, has not met on its original quarterly schedule; many times there are up to five members absent from sessions. This is no way to run a city commission.

The Economic Development Commission, headed by Mayor Cathy Clark, serves in an advisory capacity to the city council and is charged with providing recommendations regarding economic development in the city.

The commission is supposed to establish a network of communications between resources and talents within the city, identify resources and talents in the community, create development incentives and remedy regulatory barriers to job creation.

There were suggestions at some of the meetings to do an inventory of vacant commercial spaces on Keizer's main thoroughfares. This would give the city vital information about space available to businesses that want to locate to Keizer.

There was to be an effort to identify all the stakeholders and property owners up and down River Road in an effort to speak directly with those who have the final say about their property. That task hasn't been tackled by the commission.

Of course it is hard to accomplish goals when a third of your commissioners are absent from the quarterly meetings. Some members have missed more meetings than other members.

In our view, if a person accepts

appointment to a city committee, task force or commission, they should have a better than 50 percent attendance record. It is a commitment to sit on one of the many city bodies; it comes with the responsibility, as well, that each member will be attentive, productive and present.

Being a member of a city body may be a nice addition to one's resume, but that's hardly a reason to take up a seat that another person could inhabit. If an appointee to a city body is unable to fulfill their duties, that appointee needs to politely and professionally step aside in favor of someone else who is eager to be part of the process.

In the case of the Economic Development Commission there seems to be a lack of interest. Was the commission created with a vague mission? Government officials constantly talk about economic development. Here was a body that was to focus on that exclusively and it was shown little love.

Sunset the Economic Development Commission and go back to the drawing board. The original commission was to be composed of a good mix of business owners, property owners, developers and architects. That plan got skewed over the past three years in the life of the commission.

If the city is serious about economic development then it needs to be serious about the support, funding and power it gives what could be a very important body for the future of the city of Keizer.

—LAZ

editorial

letters

The best aren't getting the best

To the Editor:

The trophies awarded at tournaments hosted by Oregon Wrestling Association don't reflect the titles the winners earned as champions. The recent OWA tournament I attended with my wrestler was the Oregon Kids Folkstyle Championships. The first- and second-place trophies were simple plaques with no information such as weight class. Also, OWA didn't order enough so many were mailed. The plaques were \$5 before inscription and lower-placing medals 99¢.

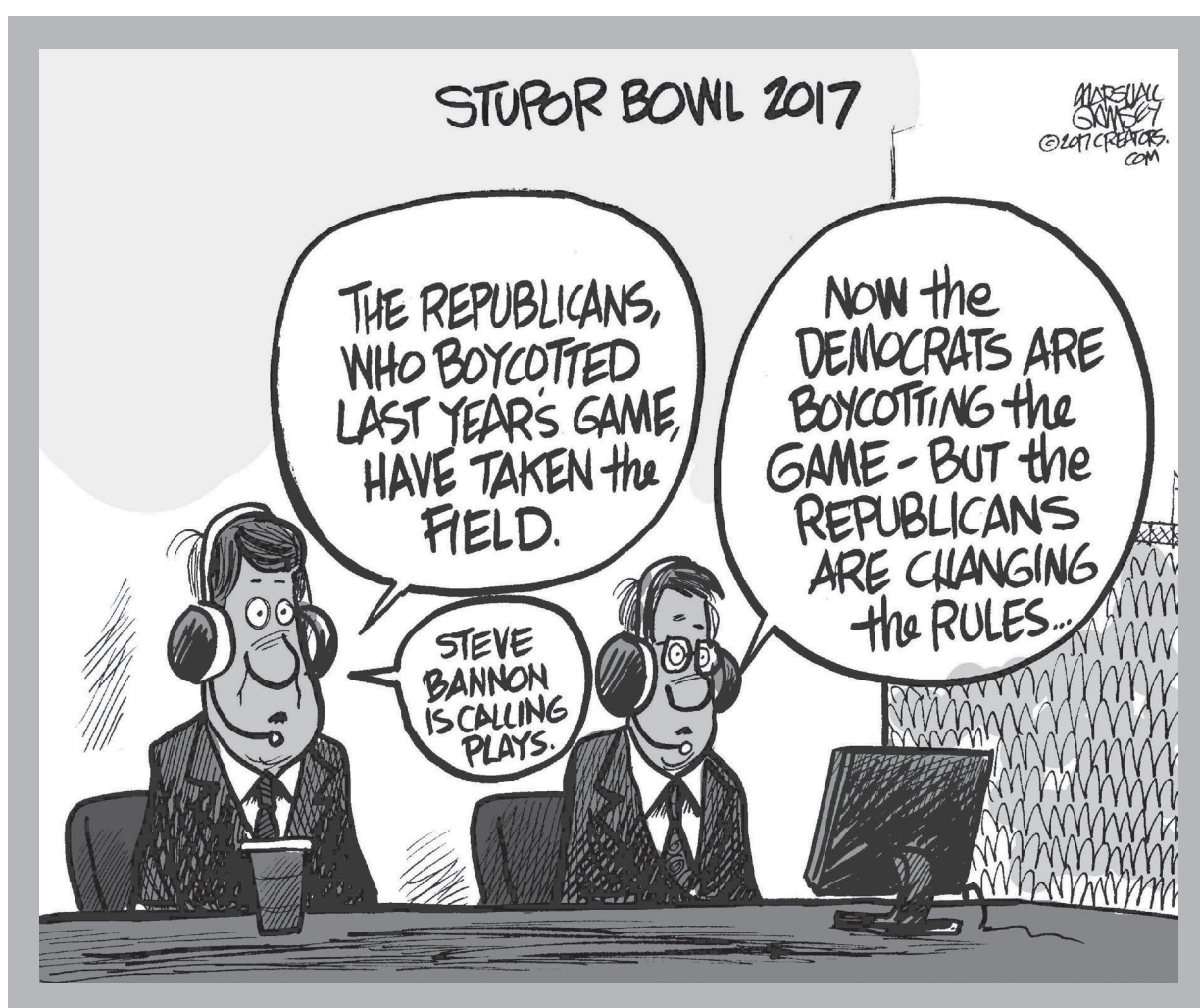
This year there were 1,193 wrestlers. Each paid registration fees of \$25, totaling \$29,825. In addition, floor passes were sold at \$25. There were 95 weight classes. Two plaques and four medals were

awarded in each, totaling \$14 in awards per weight class, \$1,330 for the tournament. While \$1,330 sounds like a lot for awards, it is only 4.46 percent of registration fees.

Many tournaments such as the Buckle Belt Challenge, Rumble at the Rock, and Best of the West tournaments award singlets, fight shorts, and belts, a \$50-\$100 value. These tournaments are spending at least four times per weight class as OWA.

My wrestler and his teammates put in many hours for these tournaments, their parents spend lots of time and money, and they should be rewarded when they are deemed the best. I hope OWA decides to properly award their champions with better trophies.

Gennifer Nelson
Newport



What are we afraid of?

What are you afraid of? Many of us feel over-taxed and under-protected by our government so first we should learn the real threats to our country before deciding where to invest in increased safety.

If safety means not dying then we should also know the causes of death in America. Center for Disease Control (CDC) statistics from 2014 show the vast majority of deaths in America were caused by some medical condition.

Most of us manage to avoid being killed accidentally or by someone with malice aforethought and inevitably die from medical conditions, many of those the inescapable result of getting old. The price of birth is death. We don't need to spend much here. Eat right and exercise—it's hard to even imagine the money saved by reducing heart disease and obesity-related disease. What are you afraid of?

Halfway down the CDC list appears the first non-medical cause of death—accidental death. Drug overdoses have now eclipsed traffic deaths as number one cause of accidental deaths. I wish I knew where an increase in funding would help to reduce drug use. If we were able to

resist using our phones for any reason while driving that would cost nothing and save plenty of lives, and the same drugs that cause overdose deaths contribute to traffic deaths. What are you afraid of?

Coming in at tenth as cause of death in America is suicide. This looks like a problem better served by compassion than cash. How does a nation so rich with opportunity seem so bleak and hopeless to more than 40,000 of us each year? It sounds naïve even to me but it seems like we could do better just by listening to each other. You can't know someone's desperation without giving them that time. What are we afraid of?

Because reduction in the rate of all these deaths would require us to change our behaviors or lifestyles we find it easier to focus on outside threats.

We could build a wall along the Mexican border. The intent here is probably more financial security than protection from terrorist violence. That wall would be more symbolic than functional—subject to tunneling, scaling, flying over and boating around. The most frequently men-

tioned cost estimate is about \$14 billion. That \$14 billion might save more lives if spent on careful control of opioid drugs, or discouraging inattentive driving. What are you afraid of?

Or we could concentrate our efforts on banning refugees from entering our country. On the CDC list for cause of death in America there is no entry for acts of terror by refugees. The Cato Institute reports that since establishment of the Refugee Act of 1980 no American has been killed in a terrorist act by a refugee that has been through the long and thorough "vetting" required to get a visa. Zero.

It is more than faintly ironic that our President tweets in apocalyptic terms the dangers of "People pouring in. Bad!" and instructs Homeland Security to "VERY CAREFULLY" check refugees already vetted, interviewed, finger-printed, DNA-checked, and finally granted a visa in a rigorous process that can go two years. This from a president who has never held a public office and still refuses to release his tax records. Not much vetting for a man assuming the most powerful position on the planet. What are you afraid of?

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

a box of soap

gene h. mcintyre

Are we ready for the way Trump governs?

Referring to Stephen Bannon as President Bannon, as in president of the United States, is quickly being viewed as no joke. Many among us are concerned (extremely concerned is more like it) that the man elected to be POTUS has already morphed into the guy called in from Breitbart to direct Donald Trump in every Oval Office decision he makes. Further, another Trump advisor, Michael Flynn, can credibly be recognized as the real new vice president.

Meanwhile, Bannon, in a move most troubling and unprecedented, has been appointed to the National Security Council. In this position of highly consequential decision-making, Bannon's serving as the de facto president. After all, Trump has made it plain that he neither knows nor understands policy or government. So, he leans heavily on others: enter Stephen Bannon, Michael Flynn and a whole host of billionaire business folks and military hawks who seek to control the fate of those American working families and the senior citizens Trump in campaign mode promised to protect, aggrandize their already excessive wealth, and lead us into more warring overseas through the propagandizing of "alternative facts."

We know from his banter and pronouncements during the campaign that Trump has shown little interest in or the understanding of issues such as health care and national security. He blithely promised to do things that were never followed up with the details for implementation. Meanwhile, the real Trump, the man behind the pompositives, has been revealed to us by way of his trite and bombastic tweets that serve only to disillusion, upset and anger all but Trump's base who support any outrage he throws out.

What's as troubling as anything else is that direct access of and availability to the Oval Office

has been surrendered to a man not elected to anything but who's well known for his anti-Semitic, racist and anti-immigrant views. These points of outlook have been among those an increasing number of Americans have diligently tried to bury with the nation's past. Then, too, Bannon has made it clear that his stated goal is to destroy the government we known and to be made over in authoritarian terms where there are no U.S. allies, only those others in the world who fear our military might if they do not do as told.

The White House is notorious for serving as a bubble of isolation around the president, a condition well known there long before 45. With the ideological political strategist Bannon as a principal on the National Security Council, while the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and director of national intelligence will be invited when their attendance is "relevant," the National Security Council will simply serve as an echo chamber of the president's views.

The frighteningly narcissistic Trump distances himself from any but a few views like those of Bannon

and Flynn. Knowing what we know about these guys, how can international issues be diplomatically managed? Trump's need for admiration along with his aversion to critical assessments, like those from reputable members of the press that he obviously loathes, makes for recklessness in virtually every matter domestic and foreign.

Members of Congress in recent years have proven only their ability to serve themselves through acts of partisanship. Only a strongly expressed, well organized and determined opposition by millions upon millions of democracy-loving Americans will be able to halt what looks already to be a disastrous course our new Commander-in-Chief is setting out for us. It's hoped, although that hope may be entirely in vane, that red state and blue state Americans will act in concert to see to it that we as a nation do not become a country without a viable future.

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

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