

# KeizerOpinion

KEIZERTIMES.COM

## A healthy city

The wheels of government turn slowly. In many cases that is a good thing because government bodies need to assure that policy making and budgeting have many moving parts and all interests and consequences need to be considered.

There are times when the wheels of government do not need to slow to a crawl, especially when it concerns free money.

The Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Cities Campaign, funded by Kaiser Permanent and other partners, is designed to play a role in reversing the trend toward sedentary behavior (think watching TV and playing video games for hours on end) and high calorie counts.

The project supports cities in efforts to improve the physical environment and give residents more opportunities to be physically active and eat healthful foods. Keizer is a fairly healthy community already—there are the many youth athletic organizations, plus the sports programs in all the schools. We are home to a number of running events. Even with one grocery store, a majority of Keizer residents have access to healthy food with WinCo, Walmart and other large stores in Salem.

editorial

There is always room for improvement in the drive to be the healthiest community Keizer can be.

To that end the city council needs to stop nitpicking the HEAL Healthy Cities program, approve applying for the designation, move forward and apply for a grant.

We suggest the Keizer Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, the council and the Public Works department work on exercise kiosks erected around city parks. Exercise kiosks are informational signs that have illustrations of how to do specific exercises for runners, walkers, specific ages. They can also include information about heart rates, pulse numbers and general information. These types of kiosks are found in public spaces all around the nation.

It is not just signs; many cities incorporate equipment made from natural materials such as logs. The equipment is used for leg work, balancing, push-ups, any number of exercises a runner or walker may do.

Our former First Lady led the “Let’s Go!” fitness campaign. Let’s go, City of Keizer. Let’s take the free money (even if it must be matched, half of it is still free) and be as healthy as we dare to be. —LAZ

## Some good bills, some not so good

The past three weeks in the Oregon legislature have been fascinating. In my second term as your state representative, I should never be surprised by some proposed bills, but I still am. For instance, in recent days there have been bills to: make marionberry pie the official pie of Oregon; change the words of our state song, *Oregon, My Oregon*; a tax on coffee and a tax on cars over 20 years old; an official dog of Oregon; a ‘no dogs on lap while driving’ bill and many others.

Both parties are guilty of some pretty “frivolous” bills. Just because a legislator can write a bill doesn’t mean they have to. The cost to the taxpayers is enormous for each one and that’s why I’ve said from day one “I’m not going to do that.” I have introduced seven good ideas that either reduce or remove bad laws or bring about more freedom for Oregonians. You can see all of them at my legislative website: [oregonlegislature.gov/post](http://oregonlegislature.gov/post).

There has been some misinformation about some of the bills, though. For example, House Bill 2365 calls for a task force to study the transfer of federal lands to Oregon. I am a chief sponsor of that bill because I believe a task force is a good idea. Let’s study this issue since so many in Oregon on either side of the fence, are interested in it. I am not calling for the transfer of lands, just a study.

Meanwhile the serious work that needs to be done in the Capitol is

finding a way to balance a budget while not raising taxes or cutting education, health care or public safety. I am very interested in what will come in the next few weeks and months.

At this time there are at least 30 or more tax bills that I know of. Oregonians spoke loud and clear (they voted 59 percent against Measure 97), yet the son of Measure 97 is one of the bills introduced. It must be noted that Oregon’s revenue has increased by over 30 percent in the past three biennium (2011-2017), yet we are told there is a “shortfall” in the budget. I am fully aware that inflation is a reality but state government must learn to live within its means. We cannot continue to spend at the same rates as we have been doing for the last several years.

Lastly, I continue to fight the dreaded “emergency clause” that is on so many bills (meaning the bill would not allow for a ballot measure). It’s still a big problem as well as is the fairly new tactic of introducing “committee bills” with no name attached. I am in favor of open and transparent government and have called on my fellow legislators to think along those lines.

Thank you for allowing me to serve you in the Oregon legislature. Please stop by and say “hello” some time.

(Bill Post represents House District 25. He can be reached at 503-986-1425 or via email at [rep.billpost@state.or.us](mailto:rep.billpost@state.or.us).)

from the capitol

Rep. BILL POST



## Food bank thanks Keizer

To the Editor:

On behalf of the Keizer Community Food Bank I want to thank the Keizer community for their continued support of the food bank during the 2016 year.

Special thanks to Uptown Music, Tony’s Kingdom of Comics, Keizer Elks (both men and ladies), Habitat for Humanity Recycle Store, Safety, 7-11, and you, the community.

We are continually grateful for the ongoing support of our food ministry program. In most cases, for every

letters

dollar we receive, we can buy three dollars’ worth of food. Core foods that we like to keep on our pantry shelves are peanut butter, tuna fish, macaroni and cheese, pasta, pasta sauce, canned fruits and vegetables, soups and cold cereal.

Donation barrels can be found at Uptown Music and Tony’s Kingdom of Comics.

For more information call Curt at 503-871-9100.

**Curt McCormack, director  
Keizer Community Food Bank**

other views

## America’s sacred fire must not be doused

By MICHAEL GERSON

“Well, I preach the Church without Christ,” says a vivid Flannery O’Connor character named Hazel Motes. “I’m member and preacher to that church where the blind don’t see and the lame don’t walk and what’s dead stays that way.”

At the heart of Donald Trump’s public rhetoric is a similar emptiness. He is a president who preaches America without exceptionalism. He is the leader of the free world who seldom mentions freedom. He belongs to a political faith in which America’s political miracle is only for us, and dissidents and democratic activists are on their own, and those who are oppressed stay that way.

Trump’s rhetorical rejection of internationalism is an aberration from America’s bipartisan, post-World War II foreign policy consensus. It is also a culmination of recent trends.

During the Barack Obama years, America retreated from internationalism in practice. At first, this may have been a reaction against George W. Bush’s foreign policy. But Obama’s tendency became a habit, and the habit hardened into a conviction. He put consistent emphasis on the risks of action and the limits of American power. In the revolt against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, following the Russian invasion of the Ukraine, as Russian influence returned to the Middle East, America inaction was taken as accommodation. “The fear of making things worse has paralyzed the United States from trying to make things better,” said

Russian dissident Garry Kasparov in recent congressional testimony.

This geostrategic retreat is consistent with a broader political trend. Summarizing recent survey data, researchers Roberto Stefan Foa and Yascha Mounk conclude: “Citizens in a number of supposedly consolidated democracies in North America and Western Europe have not only grown more critical of their political leaders. Rather, they have also become more cynical about the value of democracy as a political system, less hopeful that anything they do might influence public policy, and more willing to express support for authoritarian alternatives.”

This is a sobering development—the deconsolidation of support for liberal democracy itself. Both America and Europe are seeing the rise of leaders who have chosen to ride this trend rather than buck it. Trump’s version of strongman democracy and his abandonment of the language of liberal democracy are only imaginable in this environment.

This shift has outward-facing consequences. Dissidents and democratic activists—often driven by a stubborn, defiant passion—are not going to give up because America loses its ideological nerve. But regimes tempted to crack down on them have greater confidence in impunity. America is now less likely to criticize their “way of life,” even when these regimes evangelize with the gallows.

This shift also has inward-facing

consequences. A nation that ceases to speak for human rights may become less confident in civil rights. This type of relativism—this neutrality between freedom and authoritarianism—is easily imported across the border.

But we are not there yet. And the Trump administration itself is divided on these matters. Stephen Bannon certainly has the president’s ear and control of the speechwriting shop, which is strategic high ground. His ethnonationalists are anxious to get a running start on the road that would take America toward dishonor and failure. But the Defense and State Departments are headed by committed internationalists who understand that the growth of freedom and the spread of prosperity are essential to long-term global stability and American security.

The tools of internationalism—a strong military, strong alliances, strong international institutions, strong support for global development and democracy promotion—have a considerable cost. “Such investment,” said Kasparov, “is far more moral and far cheaper than the cycle of terror, war, refugees and military intervention that results when America leaves a vacuum of power.”

In assuming this calling of leadership, it is not ethnicity that grips the American imagination and justifies sacrifice; it is the animating ideals of the country. And it is a national advantage that our deepest beliefs are in accord with the durable hopes of humanity.

We will not find security, only darkness, by dousing America’s sacred fire. (Washington Post Writers Group)

## One agreement is first step to a functioning country

February 20 was President’s Day. On this day in 1792 the Postal Service Act was signed into law by George Washington. It was felt that a universal and affordable delivery service would help to include everyone in participatory democracy.

Universal delivery was mandated with the specific idea of all citizens having equal access to news and information regardless of income level.

Getting information about current affairs through the US Postal Service seems quaint in the smartphone age but the idea of everyone sharing in the cost of having an informed citizenry seems more important than ever.

My thirty years in the postal service made me believe it is a microcosm of America. Postal employees are mainly a hard-working, decent bunch of men and women trying to provide timely and accurate service. There are conservatives and liberals. There are religious beliefs of every stripe and some without. There are lots of outstanding employees and some that drain on the performance. There are cheerful employees and crabby. All that is set aside toward the common cause of getting the mail delivered.

The recent presidential election showed all that we, as a nation, have lost in sharing a common cause. Though we have been willing to form up sides and despise each other I doubt there is much difference in what a “liberal” and a “conservative” want for their families and future. What is it that has put us at each other’s throats?

First and most important is the realization that Congress has abandoned us. Since we’ve let stand the idea that money is free speech it is money that is heard in Washington,

DC, not speech. If money is speech then without money you are speechless. If Congress is influenced by the voices with money then legislation will always be crafted to protect and increase wealth of the one percent.

President Trump was elected as angry reaction to the abandonment of middle class America by Congress. Hillary Clinton was rightly perceived as ensuring more of the same. There

is no explanation for voters’ belief that a billionaire would somehow be the champion of the working man. The appointment of a full deck of Wall Street tycoons and billionaires to Cabinet positions does not bode well for increasing the fortunes of working class America.

During the course of the recent election it seemed like wishful thinking that simply choosing the right president could fix things. The Presi-

dent has a lot of influence but it is Congress that has brought consensus government to a grinding halt in fealty to their largest donors. The President can bluster and name names but legislators seem unaffected as long as campaign donations keep rolling in.

It’s hard to see how we might regain the attention of our legislators short of storming the walls with pitchforks and torches. As long as we are paralyzed by our divisions so will Congress be. Are there some things that we all agree would make America remain great? We’ll never know unless we talk to each other as equal partners. That is the definition of participatory democracy. That means we must trust a shared source of information. That is no longer delivered by the Postal Service. There is no longer a universally trusted source of national news. That is pulling us apart.

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



a box of soap

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