

KeizerOpinion

KEIZERTIMES.COM

Why this newspaper is in your mailbox

Once each year—in March—we here at the *Keizertimes* decide to mail an issue to every house in the city. We do it so residents who make this city their home can see there is a source for the news and information that is important to them.

What you see in this March 10 issue is a bit bigger than a regular weekly edition of the *Keizertimes*, but the content is the same and that is why it is important to show those who don't read the *Keizertimes* on a regular basis.

With the nation and the political discourse wracked with debates and arguments about what is and what is not real news, the *Keizertimes* prints what is true. The newspaper, owned by a proud Oregon publishing family for almost 30 years, has won countless awards over the decades, a testament to our mission. We publish news about city govern-

ment, police, the fire district, schools, sports (school and the Salem-Keizer Volcanoes) and stories about Keizer people.

Keizer is a special place and that is reflected every week in the pages of this newspaper.

At a time when so much is uncertain and suspect, we want those of you who do not read the *Keizertimes* regularly to know that we take what we do very seriously. We don't have an ideological agenda—however, we don't reject opinions. Page 4 (this page) is the place for people to share and express ideas and opinions. You will find opinions on this page but on every other page you will find only facts.

We hope we can turn you into a regular reader and a subscriber. Let me know personally what you like and don't like by dropping an email to publisher@keizertimes.com.

—LAZ

from
the
publisher

A day of lemons

On Saturday, May 20, Keizer and Salem, for the fourth time, turn its attention to hundreds of elementary and middle school students who will become little businesspeople for the day.

Lemonade Day, born in Houston, is a project that helps kids understand about how to create and run a business. Hundreds of lemonade stands will be stationed throughout the two cities. The kids, either individually or with a team, will have created a lemonade recipe, designed and sited a stand and attracted small investors who will give money to these budding entrepreneurs.

Lemonade Day is not a frivolous day of play. Sponsored by the Salem-Keizer Education Foundation and working with schools and other young organizations, the day teaches kids about key aspects of business they will use into the future: setting goals,

teamwork, responsibility, making and budgeting money.

Participants of Lemonade Day are asked to split their profits: one third to their education fund, one third donated to a charity of their choice and one third into their pockets as mad money.

Parents, guardians and teachers throughout Keizer should learn a little about Lemonade Day, then encourage their kids and students to be part of a growing project. The Houston, Texas area alone boasts tens of thousands of stands and revenue nearing \$50 million. That success is something to want to be part of.

The official launch of Lemonade Day 2017 was earlier this week but kids can register to have their own stand. Visiting salemkeizer.lemonadeday.org can start the whole process in creating tomorrow's business people today.

—LAZ



our
opinion

Full speed ahead on bond

Salem-Keizer School District's Long Range Facilities Planning Task Force held its final meeting last month and some decisions have to be made.

The school board will have to decide if it will pursue a bond that pays for all the projects identified. That could be up to \$550 million and it would not include any new schools. Under the task force's work, Keizer families can be confident that the city will remain a one-high school town. But issues of crowding desperately need to be addressed at McNary High School and other district schools.

McNary and other schools use portable classrooms to ease crowding in the brick and mortar buildings. The use of portable units has been in practice around the country for decades, it's an inexpensive solution that does not address long-range crowding problems.

Overcrowded schools is a quality of education issue. STEM (Science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education suffers because labs are crowded and students don't get as much time on those subjects as they should. Much attention is aimed at STEM because those subjects are the first rungs in the ladder to a collegiate education in fields that are im-

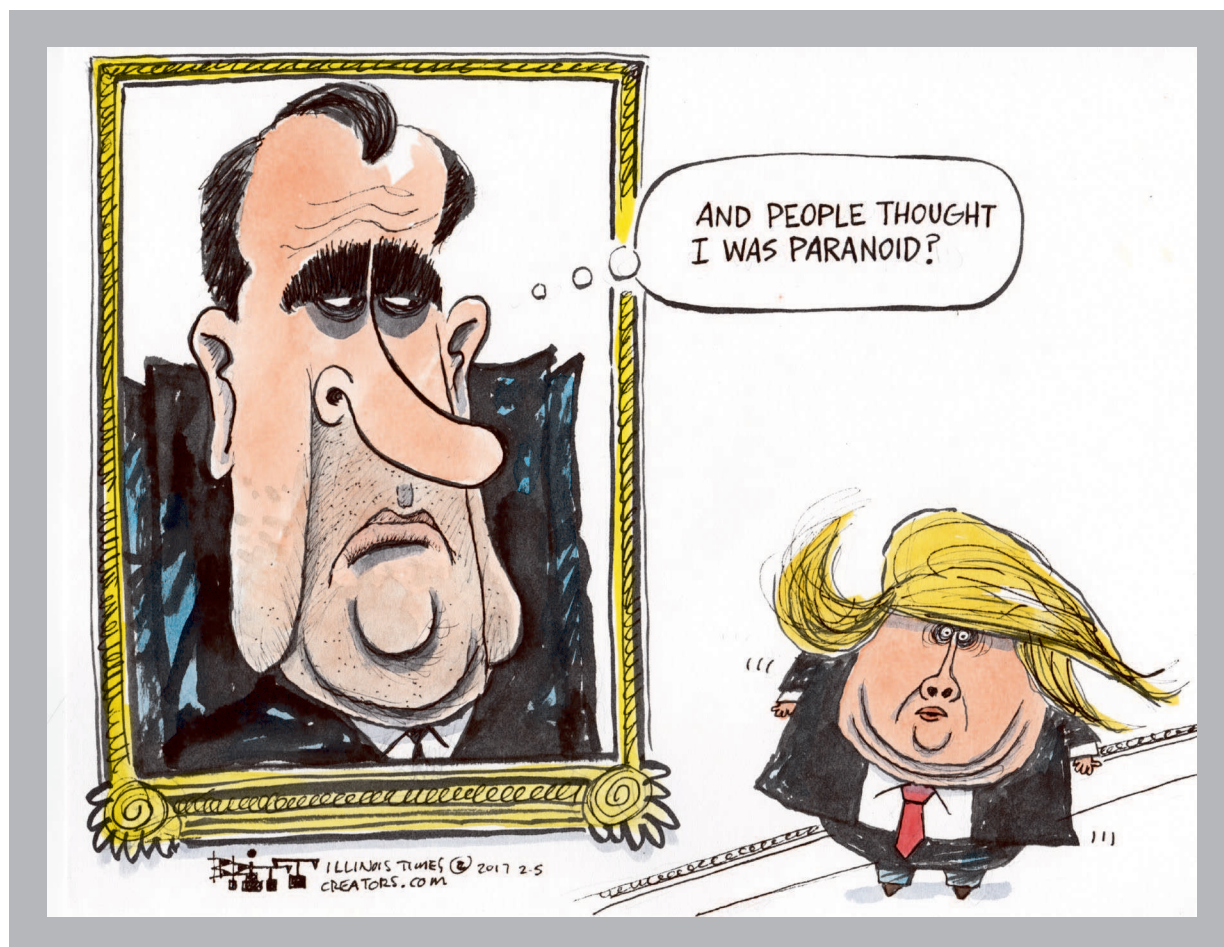
portant to the economy the U.S. is morphing into. Attention needs to be paid to all areas of high school education including the elective classes that make school palatable for many students.

It is a fact that more students will be attending Keizer and Salem schools in the coming years. There is a social obligation to assure that our children have adequate space to do their learning. If it costs the school district \$500 million to assure a quality education, then it must move forward.

Addressing seismic and overcrowding issues piecemeal should not be an option; the school district and the school board have a duty to its students to fix and expand capacity at schools as soon as possible. Discussions by the task force, the district administration or the school board are not trivial—this is an important issue that should be tackled head on and at full tilt. We support moving forward with a whole package to complete upgrades and expand capacity to present to voters.

Children are our greatest natural resource and we should not skimp when it comes to assuring that they grow into educated and engaged members of society. That's society's obligation.

—LAZ



Taking advantage of an eclipse

By DON VOWELL

Oregon is very near the center line of the path the August 21 solar eclipse will follow. If you have distant friends looking for lodging it is already too late. For this reason we have decided to open our home for those still needing a room. Not only will they be able to enjoy this very rare celestial treat but, coincidentally, it falls exactly at the same time as Lütentpillage, a rarely celebrated tribute to capitalism where local merchants observe the influx of tourists with special pricing.

In order to preserve Keizer's safety we ask that you notify prospective guests right away so there will be enough time for semi-extreme vetting. This application process will be included in the price of the room. All guests must swear they have not met with any official of the Russian government and must submit tax returns for the last five years unless of course they are currently being audited by the IRS. Because we have our finger on the pulse of American health care, so to speak, we've already repealed the Affordable Care Act at our house. We'll need a doctor's letter certifying that guests are healthy.

There will however be a small surcharge for the wall we are building around the north and south borders of our property. When we find which undesirables we are keeping

out we will bill them and send you a refund. As we have a private email server, we ask that all highly classified government business be done on your own devices. Wi-Fi is supplied free of charge. The password is \$25.

So that guests will feel fully embedded in native lifestyle the rooms are decorated in humble, thrift shop/McNary High décor typical to Keizer. Air conditioning would be out of place, but small, quiet fans are included. Rooms are carpeted and have blinds and doors to protect your privacy. Each room has a closet you could conceivably walk in. Small travel bags that fit under the bed are allowed at no cost, and there is only a \$35 fee for each larger suitcase. Each room will cost only \$345 per night. The bathroom is down the hall to the right. Owners claim first dibs. Showers are timed and rated per minute.

Directly out the back door of the house is a bird sanctuary so, though pets are welcome, we ask that you lock them in your car at all times. Speaking of cars, valet parking is available at \$30 a night. If your dogs seem resentful at spending the night in the car a complimentary pass to Keizer's beautiful riverside dog park is included at no charge.

Though we consider this estab-

lishment more bed than breakfast, a small breakfast is provided from 8 to 8:20 each morning. Choices include toaster pastries, pre-cooked sausage patties, shrink-wrapped muffins, bulk cereals, fruit-free fruit drinks, gluten-free, fat-free, sugar free, peanut-free, and taste-free items.

For your leisure time there is a piano on site. We have a television with eight or 10 channels, an original Nintendo game console with Tetris, and fully shuffled cards.

Don't miss Keizer's local attractions when you visit. We are within easy walking distance of the new roundabout, where near-misses and traffic standoffs provide thrills as passive and aggressive drivers make their decisions. There is also the Claggett Creek Wildlife Reserve where there are regular sightings of cows. Heavy rains occasionally produce enough standing water to attract a variety of mostly geese.

There is minor league baseball, little league ball and possibly a new Winco store by then. Keizer Station has lots of new stores and restaurants and guided tours will be offered so that you can avoid endless looping in search of an exit.

This is Oregon. If complete overcast prevents viewing of the eclipse a handwritten note of deep sympathy will be sent to your home. Postage due.

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

a box
of
soap

other
views

Through the looking glass

By E.J. DIONNE JR.

Donald Trump's astonishing and reckless accusation that he was wiretapped on orders from President Obama should finally be the tipping point in how the country views him and his presidency.

Obama, through a spokesman, said the charges were "simply false." It appears that Trump issued his wild tweet storm Saturday morning largely on the basis of reports in conspiracy-minded right-wing media.

He signaled his lack of evidence first by reportedly pushing his White House staff to ransack sensitive intelligence information to find support for his claim. Then on Sunday, White House press secretary Sean Spicer said Trump wanted Congress to look into the matter and that the administration would offer no further comment.

Trump has a problem either way. If he was not wiretapped, he invented a spectacularly false charge. And if a court ordered some sort of surveillance of him, on what grounds did it do so?

Every time the issue of the relationship between Trump's apparatus and Moscow comes up, he is moved to unleash unhinged counterattacks. This only underscores how urgent it is to get to the bottom of this story quickly.

We need to understand why those in Trump's orbit who engaged with Moscow stick with lies and misdirection until the moment their falsehoods are publicly revealed. The truth has to be dragged out of them by the media, working in concert with those in government (AKA "leakers") who refuse to sit by while the system they serve is endangered.

No wonder Trump hates leakers and the press. With so many Republicans in Congress prepared to abandon everything they said about accountability before Jan. 20, 2017, the main lines of defense against executive abuses have to come from journalists, those who supply them with information, and courageous judges.

The *Washington Post's* revelation last week that Attorney General Jeff Sessions misled the Senate about his two meetings with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak came after Michael Flynn, Trump's first national security adviser, lied about the nature of his own Russian contacts. Flynn stuck to false claims about his conversations with Kislyak until the *Post* and other media blew them out of the water. Flynn had to resign.

Sessions' convenient memory lapse ("I didn't have—did not have communications with the Russians") was especially jarring because it came after an inquiry from Sen. Al Franken in which the Minnesota Democrat did not even ask Sessions whether he met with Russians.

Franken's query ended this way: "... if there is any evidence that anyone affiliated with the Trump campaign communicated with the Russian government in the course of this campaign, what will you do?"

Why did Sessions think he had to respond to a question that wasn't even posed?

And during his news conference announcing his recusal from investigations into the Russia connection—Trump, by the way, was enraged because he didn't want Sessions to pull back—the attorney general remembered many things Kislyak had said, but used the phrase "I don't re-

call" five times about various other aspects of the encounters.

The Sessions moment was followed by the confirmation of previously undisclosed meetings with Kislyak, one involving Flynn and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, another with former campaign advisers Carter Page and J. D. Gordon.

The crucial issue is how all this affects our national security. But this saga also reminds us that a crowd claiming to place "America First" does not really believe its own slogan. They place only about half of America first, the part that opposed Obama and supported Trump. When it comes to the other half, they feel only contempt.

This is why Russian interference in our democracy appears to matter far less to Trump than saving his own skin. It's also why he could compare Obama unfavorably to a foreign autocrat during the 2016 campaign. He said Vladimir Putin had been "a better leader than Obama because Obama's not a leader" and ominously praised Putin for having "very strong control over a country." What do such statements have to do with American patriotism as we have traditionally understood it? And now Trump has accused Obama of violating the law.

Trump seems to assume that the truth doesn't matter anymore, that a leader just needs enough voters to believe the "alternative facts" his side invents.

If there is any good news here, it's this: Alternative facts can take you only so far. A president can't just make up charges against his predecessor, call him a "Bad (or sick) guy," and then get away with it.

Can he?
(Washington Post Writers Group)

Keizertimes

Wheatland Publishing Corp. • 142 Chemawa Road N. • Keizer, Oregon 97303
phone: 503.390.1051 • web: www.keizertimes.com • email: kt@keizertimes.com



MANAGING EDITOR
Eric A. Howald
editor@keizertimes.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Derek Wiley
news@keizertimes.com

ADVERTISING
Paula Moseley
advertising@keizertimes.com

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Andrew Jackson
graphics@keizertimes.com

LEGAL NOTICES
legals@keizertimes.com

EDITOR & PUBLISHER
Lyndon Zaitz
publisher@keizertimes.com

BUSINESS MANAGER
Laurie Painter
billing@keizertimes.com

RECEPTION
Lori Beyeler

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