

KeizerOpinion

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Fun at festival, work at Capitol

Maybe you saw Rosie the RV in the Iris Festival parade on Saturday, May 20. My crew of kids and I had a great time seeing everyone and we even won an award. I always love participating in these kinds of events and am so grateful to all the volunteers who work so hard to make this festival possible. I want to give a special shout out to Danielle Bethell, executive director of the Keizer Chamber of Commerce for her tireless work. This is what makes Keizer my home town—volunteerism.



from the capitol
Rep. BILL POST

While it was fun to see everyone, now it's back to work at the Capitol. Discussions continue around the state budget as well as transportation funding. The tone and feeling of the conversations have shifted, however. Since Secretary of State Dennis Richardson released information from an audit regarding the Oregon Health Authority. Apparently, thousands of people are receiving Medicaid payments who are not eligible. Perhaps to the tune of \$36 million a month. This is a massive number and right now it is an estimate, but even if it's half that much, this is grossly inept on the part of the agency. It also makes it hard to advocate for raising revenue if what we already have is being mismanaged this badly.

You may have heard people talking about a budget "shortfall." There is no shortfall. The "shortfall" is the difference between what state government wants to spend and what state government should spend. That's the shortfall. We have had record revenue pouring in over the past few years. We have even more unexpected revenue this next bi-

ennium (over \$200 million) and as you may have heard, it looks like the kicker will actually kick this year. We can balance our budget while still adequately funding education and other core services. By keeping state agency budgets at their current levels we don't have to cut, we just don't raise.

In general, public perception is that the two parties are constantly fighting each other. In reality, right now, the fighting in this session isn't between the different parties, it is between the leaders of the two chambers. The way the system works is that a bill originates in the House, goes through a committee, gets voted on by the House and then moves over to the Senate, where the process is repeated and then the bill goes to the governor to be signed. The system is the same in the Senate. At this point in the session, here in the House we have mostly passed all the House bills we're going to, and are moving on to voting on the bills coming over from the Senate. In fact, we have nearly 30 pages of Senate bills waiting to be voted on in the House and, interestingly enough, we're not moving very many of those Senate bills. It is a log jam created by the two chamber leaders. That's the "inside baseball" of the Oregon Legislature. Eventually, it'll all work out and we'll pass budgets and get out of here later in early summer.

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

bank robbers, wouldn't it be more prudent to place them at least below the fold? It's not like the paper would be trying to cover up the story, but the paper should do its best to put the positive things about this town front and center. There is plenty of positive things to print about, with its low crime rates and small town atmosphere, let's not put a spotlight where it doesn't need to be.

Kim Free
Keizer

letters

Push negative news below the fold

To the Editor:

My family recently moved to Keizer and have really enjoyed settling into our friendly neighborhood. I was impressed with how many nice things the city has to offer and have been getting to know its parks and local businesses better.

I like to read the *Keizertimes* and I think it does a pretty good job at representing this town and the various communities within it. I was disappointed to see that the *Keizertimes* seems to have a habit of placing very negative stories front and center at the top of the front page. No matter the case, be it attempted murder or



Insurance is a shared experience

By DON VOWELL

Iowa Congressman Rod Blum has made himself famous by asking at a town hall meeting "Why should a 62-year-old man have to buy insurance for maternity leave?"

Then there's former Rep. Joe Walsh—"Sorry Jimmy Kimmel. Your sad story doesn't obligate me or anybody else to pay for somebody else's health care." If that's not abrasive enough, he continued, "My money was earned by me and should be kept by my family and I (sic). It's not compassion to forcibly take the money I make and give it to someone else." No wonder health care is so hard.

Barbara Rank attended Congressman Blum's town hall meeting and wrote a short response that I doubt he understood. "Why should I pay for a bridge I don't cross, a sidewalk I don't walk on, a library book I don't read? Why should I pay for a flower I won't smell, a park I don't visit, or art I can't appreciate? Why should I pay the salaries of politicians I didn't vote for, a tax cut that doesn't affect me, or a loophole I can't take advantage of?" She answered by noting that we all con-

tribute for the greater good, a civil society. Generations before ours knew it.

By definition insurance means that someone else pays for your losses. If Congressman Blum's house burns down and we share the same insurance company I'll be helping to pay for the rebuilding of his home. For the forty years or so I had steady employment I paid health

insurance premiums without complaint, mostly grateful that our good health didn't require us to use it. If Congressman Blum is involved in an auto accident I bet he'll accept the pooled resources of his fellow insurance payers to replace his car. If he is faced with the responsibility of paying for the other driver's catastrophic injuries he'll be glad for our help.

It is human nature to want to pay only for things that benefit you directly. Mr. Walsh says it is not compassion to forcibly take the money he makes to pay for others' health care. Most of us can see that contributing to the greater good of a civil society benefits all of us di-

rectly. The money that Mr. Walsh hopes to keep for his family and his own benefit was earned in a country compassionate enough to make it possible. However, to earn that money he was aided by infrastructure.

Everybody shares. It is easy to see how stupid it is to imagine you are self-sufficient. Could you drive only on roads you personally built? Call only on a cell network that you had placed around the country? Could you survive on food you are able to grow? Drink only water you plumbed in free of contaminants? Could you save your burning home with your garden hose? Who would you Google if you couldn't Google Google? Everybody shares.

We drive cautiously and pay attention to possible hazards in our Keizer home. We also support the Keizer Police Department, the Keizer Fire District and city hall in spirit and in taxes paid, seeing their value while hoping that we'll never need their intervention. If we make sure the families entering our schools are healthy, safe, and secure its taxes well spent, even compassionately spent. It's why we like living here.

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

a box of soap

President Trump in Saudia Arabia

By GENE H. MCINTYRE

After 150 days on the job, President Donald Trump finally, without tweets or mendacities, presented himself in presidential form. Ironically, this demonstration afforded him a measure of respect and dignity—not provided at home yet—in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, where the president spoke before a gathering of leaders from 50 Islam-dominant nations, citizens of several he wants to keep from entering the U.S.

Mainly he wants these Muslim leaders to drive out and otherwise eradicate those who organize to make terrorism their way of life. Thereby, Trump argued, to make the entire world a more safe, peaceful and prosperous place. That's great and surely is wanted by the average human on our planet, but it does not address the most important problem to those Arabs and others in Muslim nations not able to have a hand whatsoever in deciding their own fate.

Take, for example, among the Arab nations and Trump's host, Saudi Arabia. The unrest there and efforts to overthrow the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia come from many sources of long-time, extreme discontent. In brief explanation, as readers may already know, there are two major branches of Islam in the world, the Sunni and Shia, that had their origin some 14 centuries ago over whom, among his followers, would be Mohammed's successor.

In Saudi Arabia and other majority Sunni nations, the Shia are repressed and forced, at best, into second-class citizenship. As an ARAMCO employee in Saudi Arabia for six years, I witnessed the fact that no Shiite could hold a company position of authority and really were not trusted at all. Then there is the royal family of Saudi Arabia that, hand-in-hand with the Sunni Muslim religious leaders there, decides and enforces all the laws, mainly of religious interpretation. Saudi women are also second

class citizens and quite controlled by the men folk. Then there's the U.S. military's presence along with all its infidels.

The above problems have caused an explosion of discontent among the Saudi population that has organized for years to overthrow the monarchy, more so since the Americans arrived during the "Cold War" to "protect" Saudi Arabia from the U.S.S.R. and make sure its oil went to the U.S. These Saudis are

not only angry with the Saudi king and royal family for their debauchery but are angry with Americans who they view as having defiled their holy land. Osama bin Laden was a Saudi as were many of his followers and perpetrators of 9/11. Many nowadays serve in the ranks of ISIS, having formerly serving in al-Qaeda.

There continue to be a considerable number of Saudis who are unhappy and want significant change that would bring a new Saudi Arabia without a monarchy, with Sharia law, and the total expulsion of anything American. The greatest currently anticipated problem was the Trump an-

nouncement during his visit to Saudi Arabia that the U.S. will sell that nation billions of dollars in armaments. And those armaments will be used mainly to crush internal Saudi revolutionaries and destroy, where possible, Shia-dominated Islamic nations.

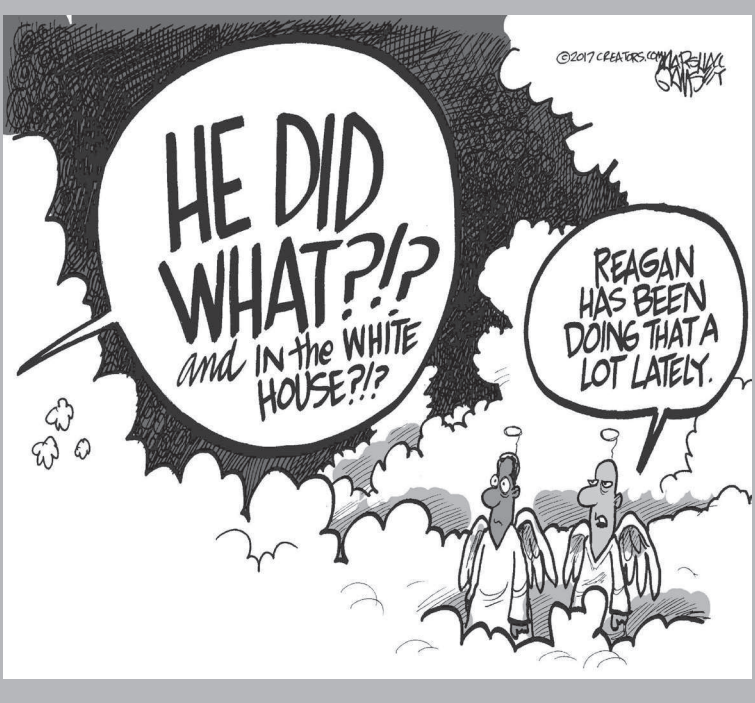
Hence, what's been going on in Saudi Arabia and against its opponents—due to the centuries ongoing Sunni-Shia conflict—will predictably continue and promises, with more arms pumped into the Middle East, to get worse, much worse.

There will be no peace in the Middle East and the revolutionaries will continue in ISIS form, or something just like it, into any foreseeable future: the U.S. once again only having served, by taking sides and giving guns, to make continuing war and its deadly consequences to continue no matter how devastatingly the U.S. treasury is drained and the evermore loss of American lives.

The best predictor of the future is the past, true now and always has been true. And this new deal between the U.S. administration and Saudi Arabia simply spells more very serious trouble and perpetual problems for almost everyone, everywhere.

(Gene H. McIntyre lives in Keizer.)

guest column



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