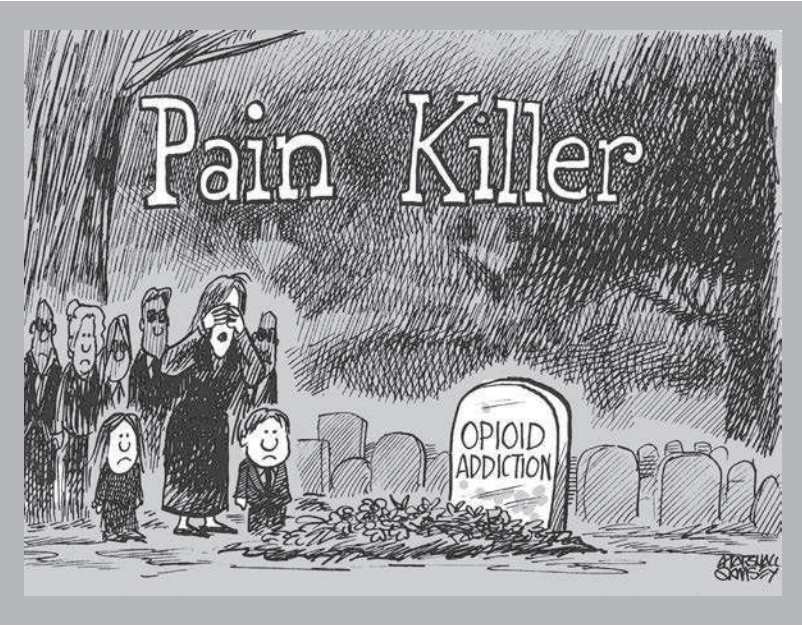


KeizerOpinion

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Paying for Keizer's livability

The Keizer City Council has passed new fees to support the police department and the city's 19 parks. Each fee is \$4 per month that is added to the water/sewer bills (the bi-monthly addition to invoices total will be \$16).

The collection of the new fees will start in November. Instead of receiving a water bill, homeowners and business owners will receive a city services invoice which include the two new fees.

The approval of the two fees was not done in a vacuum; it was not done in the dark nor away from public scrutiny. The discussion of a parks fee has been in public arena for more than a year; both hearings and public forums have been held to unveil the current state of our parks as well as how much money is needed to maintain them.

Both the parks fee and the public safety fee will be dedicated—meaning revenues from each fee may only be used for parks or police and cannot be diverted to any other part of the city's budget.

The city's charter and state law allows the council to impose a service fee. It is the imposition of a tax that requires a vote of the people. Again, the council did not approve the two fees lightly. A detailed survey about parks was sent to every Keizer home earlier this year asking about everything from park amenities to frequency of use by members of the household. It gave options for a monthly fee and what each one would pay for. Interested persons could also fill out the survey online.

The state of Keizer parks and the impact of a fee were the topics at neighborhood meetings, parks board meetings and other gatherings.

There was no lack of transparency when it came to what why and how the parks fee would be. There was no survey regarding a public safety fee, but again there was transparency in the effort to add \$4 a month to water/sewer bills to add the five

people Police Chief John Teague says is needed to keep up with the needs of Keizer's police department.

Early in the process Mayor Cathy Clark was on the record saying that it should not and must not be a choice between parks and police, that it was vital to fund both for the betterment of the city and its residents.

They say that freedom isn't free, well, neither are city operations. Keizer has the lowest tax base of any full service city in Oregon; the rate was locked in with passage of several state-wide measures in the early 1990s. Keizer's founding fathers were content with a rate of \$2.08 per \$1,000 of valuation. The city has lived with that rate for more than 30 years. Some in the private sector say that the city should live within its means. That's a nice view but no one foresaw in 1982 (when Keizer was incorporated into a city) how PERS and health insurance would affect municipal budgets in 2017. The city is mandated to pay into PERS, an expenditure which increases every year. To be a preferred employer the city has to offer health insurance, and increases in that field are a given.

Some people wanted voters to have a say on the fees. There is no guarantee that voters would approve either fee; the city needs extra money now to fund two items that are crucial to the livability and marketability of Keizer. Those are the key points: homeowners need to feel secure that their investment will grow in value. That's accomplished with keeping Keizer the most desired address in the Willamette Valley.

The city should not behave as it has received a big infusion of cash to play with; parks will get better, public safety will be more secure. Keizer has shown to be a good trustee of the taxpayer dollar, but city leaders must understand that their budget decisions in the coming years will be under the citizen's microscope.

—LAZ

our opinion

Will Republicans break from Trump?

By E.J. DIONNE JR.

"Will he tell the president 'no'?" This question was at the heart of Sen. Dianne Feinstein's opening statement at last week's confirmation hearing for Christopher Wray, President Trump's nominee as FBI director. Wray was there because the man who appointed him had fired James Comey for failing, as Feinstein put it, to "pledge his loyalty" to Trump and to soft-pedal inquiries involving Russian meddling in the 2016 campaign.

The test for Wray, Feinstein said, will be his "willingness to stand up in the face of political pressure."

There is good reason to feel uneasy about having anyone appointed by Trump lead the FBI at this moment. It is obvious to all except the willfully blind that we now have a president who observes none of the norms, rules or expectations of his office and will pressure anyone at any time if doing so serves his personal interests.

We also know beyond doubt that this team will lie, and lie, and lie again whenever the matter of Russia's exertions to elect Trump and defeat Hillary Clinton arises.

Donald Trump Jr. met with a Russian lawyer connected to the Putin regime after he received an email from an intermediary promising "sensitive information" about Clinton that was "part of Russia and its government's support for Mr. Trump." His decision exploded the president's claims that neither he nor his campaign had anything to do with Russia's efforts to tilt our election his way.

The son's response to the invitation, "I love it," will become the

iconic summation of the Trump apparatus's attitude toward the assistance the president received from Vladimir Putin's regime.

Almost as instructive were the number of outright lies the Trump camp concocted to try to disguise the real motivation behind the encounter. Their story changed as *New York Times* reporters developed more information as to what happened.

The White House initially seemed to think it could get everyone to buy its fiction that the conversation—which also involved Trump's then-campaign manager, Paul Manafort, and his son-in-law, Jared Kushner—had focused on policy toward Russian adoptions.

Feinstein's suggestion that telling this president "no" has become the true measure of patriotism applies far beyond Wray. So far, Republican politicians, with a precious few exceptions, are failing this ethics exam.

The revelations about Trump Jr. might have been the moment when Republican leaders at least started to grab their luggage in preparation for disembarking from the Trump train. After all, as *Washington Post* blogger Greg Sargent underscored, there is evidence that the president himself cooperated in putting out the original lies about his son's meeting. This may prove to be the wedge that opens up a larger examination of the president's determination to cover up.

Yet the GOP is having trouble kicking its Trump habit.

While some Republican senators see the administration's dysfunction as a barrier to their Obamacare repeal efforts, others are hoping the

Trump Jr. distraction will lower the level of scrutiny of their forthcoming second draft of a health care bill. Could scandalous political behavior provide a shield for scandalous public policy?

Vice President Pence's effort to stay loyal to Trump while tip-toeing away from the latest disclosures is another sign of chaos. Marc Lotter, Pence's press secretary, attempted to draw a bright line, saying of the vice president: "He is not focused on stories about the campaign, particularly stories about the time before he joined the ticket."

But there is no bright line. This statement should widen, rather than narrow, interest in Pence's behavior because denying any relationship with Russia was central to the campaign that he was part of. It was also Pence who (in theory, at least) was in charge of vetting Michael Flynn, the national security adviser who had to resign after 24 days because of his own dissembling about Russian contacts. Pence publicly defended Flynn, and then pleaded ignorance as to what was going on.

Pence cannot be allowed to slink away from the administration whose cause he has advanced. If he's starting to see reasons for breaking with Trump, he'll have to do it outright and end his own collusion with one of the most disingenuous White Houses in our history.

The same applies to Republican leaders in Congress. When will they tell the president "no"? Feinstein's question is the right one for Wray. It should haunt Paul Ryan and Mitch McConnell, too.

(Washington Post Writers Group)

other views

Who will bring us all together?

By GENE H. MCINTYRE

After Rodney King came infamously close to death by police officers' beating, later, he famously asked, "Why can't we just get along?"

I wonder the same these days about a number of matters, one of the most poignant is getting along without a nuclear war with North Korea. Such a war would mean near total obliteration to Koreans, both North and South, while further threatening the world's climate to human long-term survival.

It is imagined tiresome to the average person throughout the world that certain persons among us rise to positions of power and influence which for centuries has meant nearly constant readiness for war and, in more recent times, total world war. World War I for example got underway by the assassination of an Austrian archduke and his wife but really had to do with the fight among European nations for hegemony. World War II began by Hitler's Nazi Germany invasions and Japanese war mongers, talking the Emperor into an attack on Pearl harbor.

The world has been on the verge of more world war since 1947 with the founding of the Warsaw Pact by the Soviet Union and its counterpart, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. When Russia replaced the USSR in 1991, the next crisis was founded by Mao Zedong's Chi-

nese government which staged a series of bold nuclear and missile tests. More upstarts to war again have brought tense years with the prospect of another world war dominating the world in recent years.

Meanwhile, most people throughout the world want to enjoy family lives that can be lived in loving peacefulness with a home, children, recreational and educational opportunities and a long life. Although these conditions may never have been experienced by most people in North Korea, it's imagined that daydreams of such a life by the average North Korean is commonplace.

Paths to a lasting world peace are constantly being identified. Most of these have been tried again and again, this time regarding North Korea, with consideration given to "surgical" military strikes, imposed sanctions and isolation, diplomacy and pushing China to do more. To date, nothing has worked in what's become known as "The Land of Lousy Options." President Trump criticized war before becoming commander-in-chief but has since his inauguration added American troops to already existing numbers of them in Afghanistan and Syria and has not closed Guantanamo any more than reducing troop numbers all over the world. He's also proven himself in all matters unpredictable, a pledge

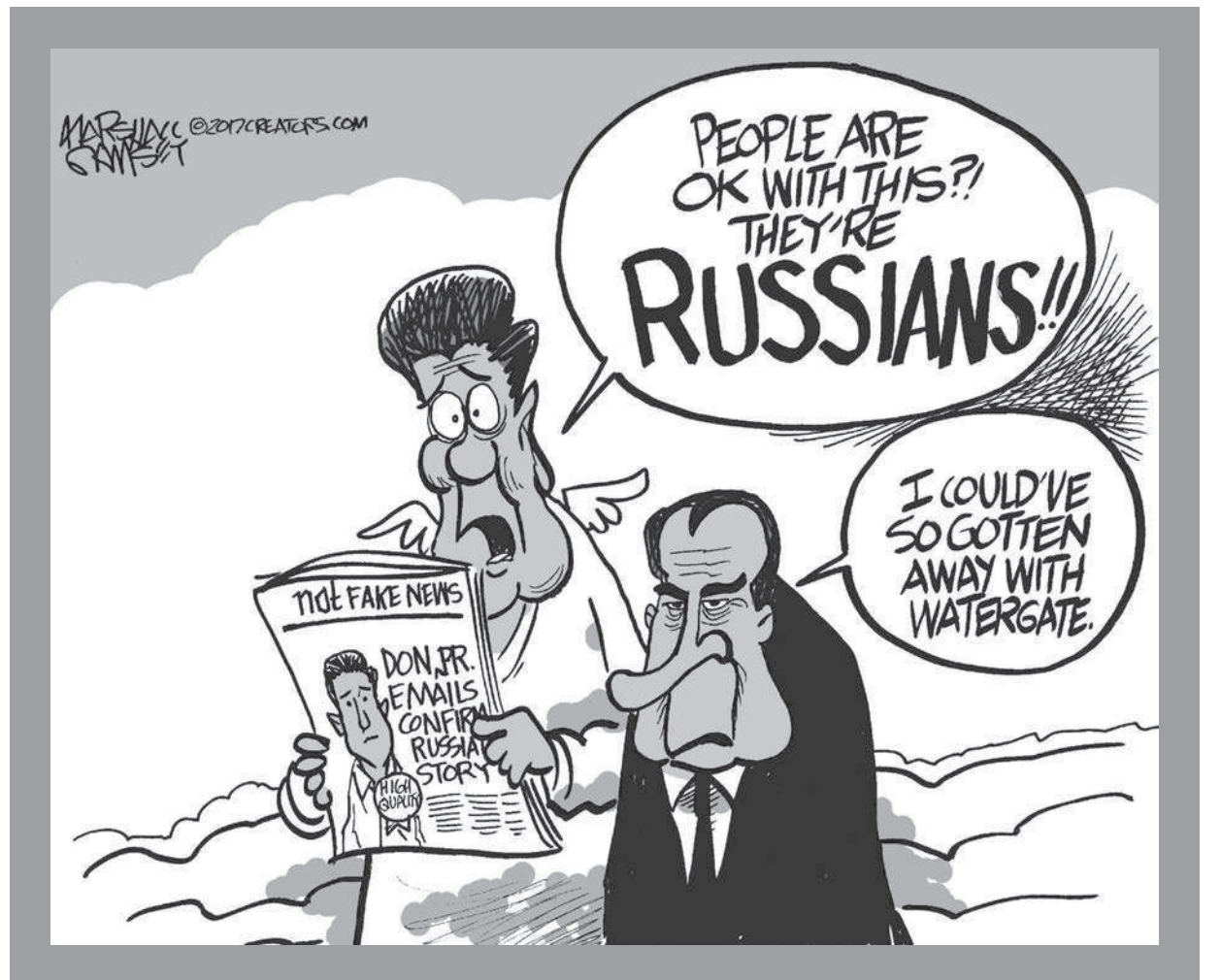
loyalty from every American his most important objective.

However, what bothers me most at present and will do so into the foreseeable future has a little less to do with more war as much as does global warming, out of which the Paris (climate) Accord President Trump has now withdrawn the U.S. It's not just the rising of sea levels and the fleeing of coastlines alone. Indeed, based on what's anticipated to happen, parts of the Earth formerly ideal for human habitation will become close to uninhabitable while other parts will be totally inhospitable. These human eradication conditions are, without a world community-of-interventions, forecasted before the end of this century.

Yes, most assuredly we must stop warring with each other (that state of peace would help decisively) devoting ourselves instead, all of us, to finding more successful ways to get along. Immediately, that's today, we earthlings must put our heads together to save the Earth from most of it being inhospitable while those remaining parts being too hot and stormy and too contaminated of air, water and soil to support human life anywhere on this planet.

(Gene H. McIntyre lives in Keizer.)

guest column



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