

# KeizerOpinion

KEIZERTIMES.COM

## Help heal Harvey havoc

Anyone who has lived in the Willamette Valley long enough has experienced flooding of some kind, whether it was the Willamette River or a tributary. It is safe to say that no one today has seen the level of flood happening in southeast Texas this week.

We all remember the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans 12 years ago. The Mississippi River's control systems and levees played their own tragic part in the devastation of Louisiana.

We Oregonians bemoan the rain, but we have never had 50 inches of rain fall in a matter of days. That rain total is now a record for the continental United States. The rain came from both the hurricane and the tropical storm; flooding resulting from hurricanes kill many more people than a storm's winds ever will.

The loss of life in Texas after the wrath of Harvey has been mercifully low, but there is still plenty of

suffering by people in Houston and southeast Texas. People can send their thoughts and prayers, financial assistance is vital, too.

Using the internet it is easy to make a donation to help with the rescue and recovery efforts. People are helping each other in Texas, people are helping animals, too. Both humans and animals need aid.

To assist financially people can opt to donate to the American Red Cross through their website, redcross.org. Other options are:

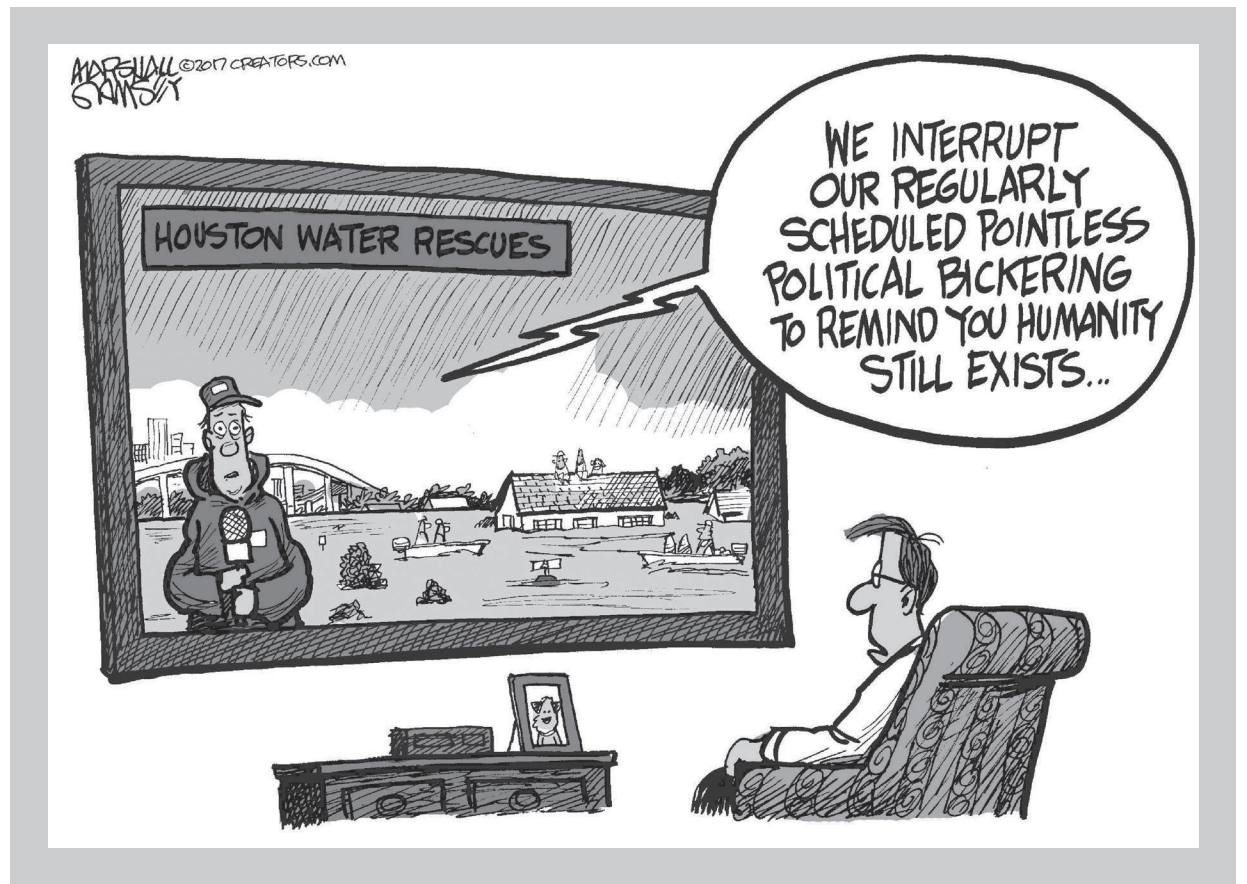
- disaster.salvationarmyusa.org.
- ghcf.org/hurricane-relief (this is a fund established by Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner).

- texasdiaperbank.org (designate your donation for Disaster Relief). Diapers are not provided by disaster relief agencies.

- spca.org (SPCA of Texas have staff, volunteers and supplies working with officials to help in the disaster relief.

— LAZ

our opinion



## School time

School begins next week, a time for drivers of all ages to be vigilant about kids walking and crossing Keizer streets in the morning and again in the afternoon.

Kids will be kids which means that their safety isn't necessarily foremost in their minds. They will take shortcuts, chase and throw balls to each other. It is up to drivers to keep on eye on the little ones.

Veteran drivers will be on the road along with young drivers who may have started driving in the summer and have no experience driving in school zones. School zones and residential streets just before and just after school is no time to be driving distracted.

The new school season is timely for Keizer drivers to take part in the Drive Healthy campaign to cut

down on distracted driving. The program, from the Oregon Department of Transportation, Oregon State Patrol and AAA, is designed to encourage healthy driving by gamifying it.

After downloading the LifeSaver app, a driver should turn off their cellphone while in the vehicle. The app will register whether the driver unlocks or uses their cellphone. Each month its scores will be posted and the app reset. People will be able to see who the safest drivers are.

We encourage all drivers to take part in the Drive Healthy campaign, we also encourage all drivers, regardless of their level of experience, to be mindful of pedestrians on our streets as school gets going.

— LAZ

## Chemawa Rd. plants

To the Editor:

My neighbors and I have highly objected to, and wondered why the grass-like plants along Chemawa Road N. were ever allowed.

They are unsightly and brushy...a terrible sight and a terrible choice for all residents along Chemawa to have to trim down, not only for a better looking scenic view but they are actually—in some areas—are making entry onto Chemawa Road unsafe.

Who okayed these beastly plants anyway? Whoever it was obviously knew nothing about gardening, plant selection or beauty.

If I were to take a survey regard-

letters

ing these plants, most residents along Chemawa would vote to move and destroy them right away and let the lovely plants twisted inside of the plots grow to show their beauty.

Also, we residents would not have to break our backs cutting them down more often than crews have been doing, especially where we cannot see the street safely.

Lorna Moore  
Keizer

### Share your opinion

Email a letter to the editor (300 words) by noon Tuesday.

Email to: [publisher@keizertimes.com](mailto:publisher@keizertimes.com)

## Pardon deepened moral damage to the GOP

By MICHAEL GERSON

Repetition is the enemy of maintaining proper distinctions. It is a short road from being serially outraged to being slightly bored to being completely inured.

Thus, many are likely to find the pardon of former Arizona county sheriff Joseph Arpaio to be just another ... something. Just another public feeding of Donald Trump's base; or just an additional shiny distraction from real issues; or just one more cause for head-shaking and shoulder-shrugging; or just further evidence of the tawdry political company kept by the president of the United States.

This would be a mistake. This presidential action is not "just" anything. Following his expression of sympathy for the "very fine people" attending a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville—who were, he said, defending "our history and heritage"—Trump must have known his next move would be highly symbolic, either as a retreat from prejudice or as its affirmation. What followed with the Arpaio pardon constitutes the most forthright racist incitement of the Trump era.

Trump has called Arpaio a "great American patriot," employing a definition of patriotism that includes extreme ethnic profiling, terror raids, and cruel and unusual punishment. A definition of patriotism that covers using internment camps in extreme heat, parading women and juvenile offenders for the cameras in chain gangs,

and degrading inmates in creative acts of bullying. This is not patriotism; it is the abuse of power in the cause of bigotry.

Resulting from a process that evidently did not involve the normal review and recommendation of the Department of Justice's pardon attorney.

Was White House Counsel Donald McGahn involved in this permission for swaggering government oppression? Better question: Why did he not resign in protest?

Congressional Republicans have often taken a wait-and-see attitude toward the dishonoring and destruction of their party. Now they can hardly deny that Trump's worst moments are his most authentic moments, or that his definition of loyalty requires defending the indefensible. A few voices—including both Arizona senators and House Speaker Paul Ryan—were critical of the pardon. But congressional hearings demanding an account of the pardon's purpose and process would demonstrate seriousness in the only task—the only path of self-respect and self-preservation—left to Republican leaders: attempting to salvage a party identity separate from racism.

These legal and political ramifications are clear enough. But it is the moral damage that is deepest: the stoking of tribal hatreds; the reckless fracturing of national unity; and the statement made about human worth.

A society's treatment of prisoners is a measure of its commitment to hu-

man dignity. Some of these men and women are guilty only of the wrong geography in trying to feed their families. Others have done terrible things. But they are still—all of them—men and women, human beings, at the complete mercy of the state. According to Jewish and Christian teaching, they bear God's image, which can never be completely effaced. Treating them humanely is the expression of a defining national belief: that human rights are not earned or granted, they are recognized. Or not.

Arpaio made a career of dehumanizing prisoners in his charge. His pardon sends the signal that some people are less than human. In one sense, this is perfectly consistent. Trump has employed dehumanization as a political tool from the start—of refugees, of migrants, of Muslims. By his pardon of Arpaio, he has metaphorically pardoned his own cruel and divisive approach to politics. It is a further step in Trump's normalization and entrenchment of bigotry in our public life.

This creates a personal dilemma for many Republicans. How do they explain to their neighbors, and to their own children, their involvement with an institution that has been allied with forces of exclusion (at least at the national level)? The answer is not for all people with pricked consciences to leave, lest only unpricked consciences remain. But complacency is permission. Resistance is required. Any party that swallows the Trump/Arpaio ethic will be poisoned. And gagging, in this case, is a sign of health.

(Washington Post Writers Group)

other views

## Is there an end to Afghanistan involvement?

It's probable that many Keizerites feel that other peoples throughout the world live differently and believe differently from what's flexibly recognized as the average American. Meanwhile, in this column writer's experience, having lived for extensive periods of time as a civilian in other lands and places, nowhere on earth is in greater contrast to our U.S.A. than Afghanistan.

Any American, should he or she want to look closely, will see that Afghanistan is a virtual cauldron beset by ethnic, religious, cultural and tribal factions that have endured since the British tried to make it a peaceful, productive colony in the 1800s. There are available to the American seeking insights from the days of old, the diaries of British occupiers who wrote letters home to their families just before they became another casualty.

President Trump, who's known widely for not doing his homework on any subject and who apparently can be easily persuaded by a White House full of U.S. military generals, now believes that more troops along with pressure on the redoubtable Pakistan and some olive branches extended to the diehard Taliban, will bring him and his inner circle a winning strategy that hasn't worked for the 16 years we've been there as well as the best of efforts by England (19th century) and Russia (20th century).

Whatever moves him at that moment, Trump has now said that the "American strategy in Afghanistan and South Asia will change dramatically," with "a shift from a time-based approach to one based on conditions." What that means in specific terms, always the Trump approach, heavy on the vague and the general, can result in nothing or something. From which, as usual, Trump will claim

a great outcome even if the facts add up to zip.

Warring against the Taliban has already cost our country more than \$714 billion. Yet, he, himself, alone, a self-proclaimed "no one's better" negotiator, who promised in campaigning to get us out of wars overseas, has given Defense Secretary James Mattis the authority to raise troop levels and "target the terrorist and criminal networks that sow violence and chaos throughout Afghanistan."

Some Americans talk about the Afghans as though we are there to save them from themselves. They don't want to be saved by us or anyone else: they've proven that for centuries. Their condition is mostly due to Afghan geography as a path from Asia and the Far East to the Middle East and further west. They have fought off foreigners, using whatever near-Stone-Age-weapons they could carve for use and later the weapons they could re-apply for their own use from the British, the Russians

and, now the Americans. They will always seek their independence while we'll simply spend more treasury to die there.

Fifty-seven years ago, President Dwight D. Eisenhower warned about a future where the military-industrial complex would rule the land. We see it quite plainly in Afghanistan where U.S. generals want more stars, stripes and celebrity and American arms-building companies want to sell more weapons at huge government-gone-wild profits. We have so much more we could do with our tax dollars than buy more warring; it's so very misguided that our current president is so easily persuaded by these people, but, to understand it all, just follow the money.

Remember, too, that the U.S. has spy satellites and drones to keep an eye on what's happening in Afghanistan and nearby. There's no need to spend more than what's been spent on them to empty to the bottom an already depleted treasury and waste more American lives on a battlefield with no victory, not now, not ever.

(Gene H. McIntyre lives in Keizer.)

guest column



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