

# KeizerOpinion

KEIZERTIMES.COM

## Cap amenity fee at \$25,000

A plan to enact a fee on commercial development to fund public amenities in Keizer is going to get a second, deeper look by the city council.

The council was scheduled to act on the amendment to the development code at this week's meeting. The issue has been continued to the first council meeting in October. The public hearing on the matter will also be re-opened.

The public amenities will include landscaping that is up to code for new development and also a contribution to Keizer's public art program equal to 1 percent of the project's total worth.

Many cities, counties and states have such a provision. In many cities in America a visitor can see lots of public art that is paid for with a required 1 percent contribution. Keizer's public art program has become anemic and has yet to live up to its potential. Establishing a contribution program from commercial development is a good way to assure that the public art program is well-funded and continues to add pieces and events to our city.

A sticking point that arose at this week's council meeting was the cost to a developer. The value of a new dental office being built in Keizer Station could be up to \$8 million; one percent is \$80,000—a large contribution for public amenities in Keizer. Some say there should be more parity amongst differing developments. As it was pointed out at Monday's council meeting, a dental office is a specialized

building that has much higher cost and value than a standard office.

When the council takes up this issue again next month it should consider a cap on contributions. For example, a 1 percent contribution for art, with a cap of \$25,000. If there were only two new commercial developments a year (it is very unlikely there would be that few), the public art program would get a \$50,000 shot in the arm. That's much more than it has ever gotten in any one year period.

There are costs to doing business. The costs from the city of Keizer are low. Marion County is the body that issues permits for construction and they set the cost for such permits. It is relatively inexpensive to do business in and with the city of Keizer. When many individuals and companies endeavor to 'give back' to the community, a contribution of 1 percent of a project's worth, capped at \$25,000, is an investment benefits the whole community.

Several councilors that have stated that they are not artists and do not feel competent to assess art submissions. There is a mechanism in place for that purpose: the Keizer Public Arts Commission, which should remain the final word on acceptable art.

Funding public art willy nilly doesn't work. The council should push forward and make required contributions easy for developers to swallow so the city can be a showcase of art for now and into the future.

—LAZ

our opinion



## The dangerous triumph of tribalism

By MICHAEL GERSON

In his prescient science-fiction novel *The Diamond Age*, Neal Stephenson describes a post-national world in which people organize themselves into affinity groups called "phyles." Some choose to be Victorians, emulating the beliefs and aesthetic of 19th-century Britain. Others identify with the values and dress of the Boers. The Celestial Kingdom is a Chinese culture phyle. In *The Diamond Age*, globalization has erased the nation-state

and left people—always hungry for belonging—to identify themselves entirely by culture. A provocative new essay by Andrew Sullivan, *America Wasn't Built for Humans*, describes the emergence of two American phyles. One is more racially diverse, urban, secular and globalist. The other is largely white, rural and exurban, religious and nationalist. Their conflict is the context of American politics. At stake is the idea that "American" describes a single people.

In Sullivan's description, the "myths" that used to help unify the country—the ideal of assimilation, the idea of America's founders as exemplars of constitutional values—have been weakened. "We dismantled many of our myths," he argues, "but have not yet formed new ones to replace them." The result is the dangerous triumph of cultural identification over unifying political ideals.

Who is at fault for the depth of this mental divide? It is the nature of political polarization that both American tribes blame each other. Sullivan blames them both, but not quite equally.

other views

According to Sullivan, members of the blue tribe have created problems in the realm of ideology. Some have promiscuously accused the red phyle of hate speech and white supremacy, rendering the terms less powerful when required to describe the real thing. Marxist ideologies on race and gender have "become the premises of higher education, the orthodoxy of a new and mandatory religion," says Sullivan.

But it is the red tribe, in Sullivan's view, that has most effectively injected tribalism into politics. It was Barry Goldwater (by opposing the Civil Rights Act) who re-racialized the competition between the two parties. It was former California Gov. Pete Wilson who cultivated a fear of migrants for political purposes. It was Newt Gingrich who disdained comity and embraced politics as combat. And it is Donald Trump who has given angry whites their own form of identity politics.

As an electoral matter, Sullivan finds the two American tribes "eerily balanced" and committed to obliterating the other side. We are seeing what happens when an unrepentant tribalist controls the presidency. Depending on the political fate of the House of Representatives, we may see what happens when the opposing tribe tries to remove him.

The problem identified by Sullivan is that tribalism is our default value—the "our" here covering all *Homo sapiens*. The ability to quickly and intuitively distinguish "us" from "them"—likely someone from another tribe

intent on taking resources or lives—was a tremendous evolutionary advantage on the plains of Africa. It is slightly less helpful in the halls of Congress. But the history of demagoguery shows how useful it can be in the gaining and holding of power. "We have created a Star Wars civilization," said E.O. Wilson, "with Stone Age emotions."

Sullivan believes that America's founders would have been surprised by our cultural tribalism and skeptical that any republic could survive it. I'm inclined to think that Alexander Hamilton—who viewed men as essentially "ambitious, vindictive and rapacious"—would be unfazed. But few (or none) of the founders would have viewed political parties based on cultural identification as a positive thing.

Most interestingly, Sullivan proposes a response to tribalism that is not structural, but essentially spiritual. He urges a renewed appreciation of individuality, citing himself—a gay Catholic, conservative independent, religious secularist—as a misfit challenge to tribal conformity. As an evangelical sympathetic to gay rights, a Republican critic of Trump and a compassionate conservative, I can relate. We need a political system that makes room for human complexity.

Sullivan also urges "mutual forgiveness" as the basis for genuine reconciliation. "No tribal conflict," he says, "has ever been unwound without magnanimity." We need the spirit of Abraham Lincoln and Nelson Mandela in our politics, which is essentially to call for a miracle. It is the secret strength of democracy that miracles occasionally happen.

(Washington Post Writers Group)

## A representative for all?

To the Editor:

Seriously? Our state representative, Bill Post, is back on the air and this time on the crazy station—opening act for the likes of Hair Club model Sean Hannity and Alex Jones.

I get it; I understand the allure of minor celebrity—been there, done that (for 25 years), but legislators are supposed to be serious people who represent the whole of the district, not just the easily fooled fringes.

If Mr. Post wants a career in fake news, fine, it's a free country and I don't have to listen to him. But I hear he's also filed for reelection and that is troubling. I suggest he either rein in his ego and look for a grown up job or abandon the reelection bid. There are serious people out there in both parties who would be happy to vie for the Post post.

Martin Doerfler  
Keizer

letters

ing in 2020 before going down and that would require government support.

Please write your local officials and senators to begin taking action to combat the opiate epidemic and steer us away from the disaster course we are on. There are many different approaches to the challenge of how to address the opiate epidemic. For more information visit: [www.narcononewlifere-treat.org/blog/the-horrifying-future-of-the-heroin-epidemic.html](http://www.narcononewlifere-treat.org/blog/the-horrifying-future-of-the-heroin-epidemic.html).

Aaron Olson  
Narconon New Life Retreat

## Crossing the Columbia River

To the Editor:

Presently, there isn't enough money available to replace the aging Interstate 5 bridge in the manner currently envisioned. But there still might be a way to build the badly needed replacement by constructing a new crossing in stages.

Phase one: Build a northbound span. Include an emergency access lane.

Phase two: Open the new northbound span and convert the existing steel bridge to southbound only traffic. This change will immediately cut the traffic flow over the old bridge by one half which will greatly extend the life of the bridge. Provide for emergency access.

Phase three: Construct a new southbound span when future funding becomes available. Include an emergency access lane.

Phase four: In time, dismantle and remove the existing and worn steel bridge. Or adapt it to accommodate light rail to create an experimental light rail link between Portland and Vancouver.

By building the new crossing in stages it may be easier to align existing and new roadways and lanes which will minimize the need for right-of-way purchases.

Designers and planners will argue that there is no project engineering economy by having to mobilize for construction more than once and in an ideal situation this would be correct. But realistically, there may be no alternative to constructing the project in phases. There simply isn't enough money available to build a complete replacement all in one step.

Jim Parr  
Keizer

## Ask legislators to help opioid crisis

To the Editor:

According to the American Society of Addiction Medicine, the leading cause of accidental death in 2015 was drug overdose. The life toll from the drug epidemic has been consistently growing over the past couple of years with opiate addiction and overdose being one of the lead causes.

Each year, more people use drugs for the first time and wind up addicted. Right now, the highest number of opiate overdoses are in the Northeast. The problem originally started with heroin as the main contributor however newer drugs have begun to escalate the problem. Fentanyl has begun to be mixed into heroin with devastating consequences. This combination is so potent there have been fatal overdoses of non-users who merely got the substance on their skin.

Now more than ever, those in our country who are struggling with substance abuse need help getting into a heroin addiction rehab. According to the Center for Disease Control or CDC, drug overdose deaths have increased more than 2.5 times compared to what they were in 1999. In fact, according to a study by experts at 10 universities, the problem can get much worse. At this point, the best-case scenario would be overdose deaths peak-

## Divisions in our united state

By GENE H. MCINTYRE

What is most challenging is to keep our country united when we are so divided. Nevertheless, it's not at all like this is a modern day phenomenon. Really, our divisions go back to American beginnings as any study of those times past does not reveal an integrated, interdependent and unified America. To believe the contrary is to ignore and misread our history.

What is referenced is the polarization and philosophical and political differences among those various states and regions of this country as there are the red states and blue states, the coastal states and the heartland states, the big states and little ones. Pondering life in our time means to ask the most salient question: Is the American democracy at risk because of the deep divisions and separations throughout the country?

Our nation's founding had what would become the United States by way of the Articles of Confederation which created a weak form of central government with no power to Congress. This loose condition of togetherness with all its difficulties got our forebearers to the 1787 Continental Convention "to devise such further provisions as shall appear to render the constitution of the Federal Government adequate to the exigencies of the union."

Those fits and starts were no piece of cake as the convention of 55 delegates from 12 states (opposing it without debate, Rhode Island, sent no one) was convened in Philadelphia in May, 1787 where, after many proposals through September, 39 of the 55 delegates voted to adopt the Constitution. Among its provisions: it re-

guest column

stricted Congress from regulating the slave trade for 20 years, counted slaves as three-fifths of a person, but did lastingly decided that representatives would be based on population with two senators from each state.

Getting it adopted in Philadelphia was the easy part as ratification required further compromises and amendments. The most compelling concern, and the biggest bugaboo ever since, was the concern about too much power given to the central government; after all, the American patriots, those who didn't flee to Canada, had just fought a six-year war to rid themselves of the British and the much-loathed King of England.

Ultimately, what was demanded by those with a voice became the Bill of Rights with, at the time, and to the present day, the Tenth Amendment that reads, "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States, respectively, or to the people."

Other amendments to the U.S. Constitution have what are called pivot points in our history. However, the tensions between states rights and federal rights have determined whether our "united" states have come closer or fallen apart. Some examples of these issues have been the Civil War, the 14th Amendment, Brown v. Board of Education, Civil Right Act of 1964 and Roe v. Wade.

Some among us would argue that states rights has got us to where we are today. Yet, the dysfunctional Congress, ignorant and gullible citizens, political polarization, economic inequality, the

changing nature of work in America, culture clashes between society's segments here, negative attitudes regarding our institutions, globalization of corporations, fear of Muslim immigrants are viewed as more destructive than, for just two examples, whether the disparate populations of Rhode Island and California should each send two senators to D.C. and the Electoral College.

What weighs most heavily on this column writer's outlook for a viable U.S. future or the end of a great experiment in self rule is the number of legislators and other elected officials in my state, and the other states, so many office holders, and those we send to the nation's capital. Rather, it's those who are there due to the money they collect to win elections. Yet, in our entire history as a nation there's been no time that exceeded ours in what looks most often like a virtual stampede to make money and use it to power one's way to influence the nation's direction to new laws and the interpretation of old ones.

No matter what issue is reviewed, among them, corporate and the wealthy tax breaks, medical insurance, Muslim immigration, voting rights, justice equality, Russian meddling in our elections, et cetera, all things come down to who's got enough money to power his way with promises made to donors and the beholden that result in things getting done or not, too often by those with the most money. When moolah is the main, monopolizing, most important value in our country then we end with a place that's mainly amoral, unethical and undesirable to those within and outside with far too many having have no stake in its future.

(Gene H. McIntyre lives in Keizer.)

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