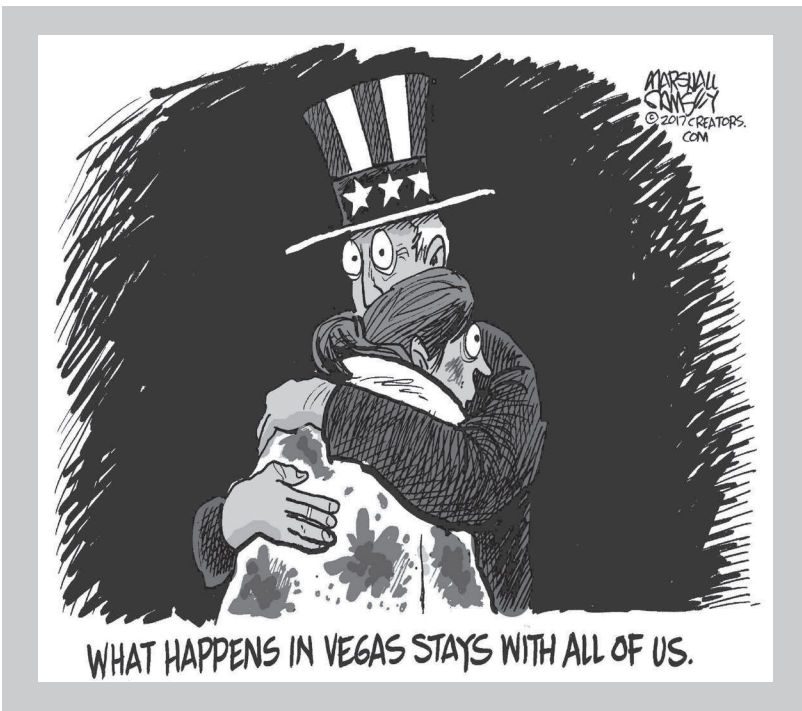


# KeizerOpinion

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## Quality of life

Every political issue, every single piece of legislation (on both state and federal levels) is about quality of life. The kind of life that everyone wants for themselves, their families, the kind of life that is promised in our constitution and Bill of Rights. We have been guaranteed the right to pursue happiness.

Whose happiness comes first? Is the happiness of a young family of four paramount to the happiness of a corporate chieftain or political leader or vice versa? The great experiment known as American democracy is an on-going struggle involving many definitions of happiness. The nation was divided in the 1930s when many people wanted to stay out of Europe's business; by the early 1940s most American's were doing their part for the war effort including iron and rubber drives and growing Victory Gardens.

The difference between the 1930s and the early 1940s was of course Pearl Harbor—America had been attacked. Once the U.S. declared war on Japan, the Empire's ally, Hitler's Germany declared war on America. Then all Americans were in the fight, the good fight to defeat Facism and save the world for democracy. That was the work of the Greatest Generation.

If you want your people to come together you need to identify a common enemy. Americans figuratively locked arms in solidarity after the attacks of 9/11; the enemy was Osama Bin Laden and terrorism. That post-attack solidarity soon sprouted fissures and the country was back to partian-ship.

Quality of life is a mother's issue. One need look no further than Mothers Against Drunk Driving to see the power of mothers. From the single idea of Candy Lightner came this powerful national organization fighting against drinking and driving. To see how tough a woman can be, just

threaten her children; that mother will show no mercy when protecting her children. Which makes violence very much a mother's issue.

Think of the thousands of mothers who have been left grieving over the untimely death of a child due to violence, especially gun violence. While only a small fraction of society advocates the banning of all guns, a much larger percentage of society understands that will never

happen. But what can happen, led by mothers across the nation, is gun reform that strenghtens legislation that even the NRA supports.

There are plenty of women and mothers who own a gun for their own protection or for sport. Curiously, only one of the many mass shooters in recent years have been female.

Our democracy allows people to talk for or against guns and other weapons. That same democracy also allows one side to cow the other side so that any talk about gun control is shut down. Some politicians say that the time to talk about gun control reform is not after a mass shooting, in deference to the victims. At the rate of mass shootings there will never be a time to have a honest dialogue about guns.

Every victim of violence is somebody's child. The normal order of things is that a child is not supposed to precede their parents in death. A serious discussion of violence and guns in this country can happen if mothers, the protectors of our quality of life, join arms and seek changes to our gun culture.

Guns will not be banned, ever, in this country; but, changes can be made to make them less accessible to those who shouldn't have them as well as prevent a gun from being turned from a one-shot gun into a automatic weapon.

— LAZ

our opinion

## How we should pray

By MICHAEL GERSON

One thing we learn from tragedy: that there is always more to come.

We experience the death of a loved one, the suicide of a friend, the suffering of a child, and the harshness and pain of the world break in, unannounced and unwelcome. Few have been spared, and then only temporarily.

But sometimes there are moments when we experience tragedy, not individually, but collectively, as a country, in events that seem too terrible for a single day. This is what happened in Las Vegas, with bullets from the sky, bringing death, sudden and unearned. In days to come, we may learn the dark reasons or manias that produced homicide on such a scale. We will also hear more stories of self-sacrifice, as friends helped friends, and parents instinctively reached out to shield the bodies of their children. "They're 20," said one man. "I'm 53. I lived a good life."

All of us who interpret events for a living look into the abyss of tragedy and tend to see reasons for what brings us comfort. For some, it is passage of a law. For others, support for a religious or philosophic belief. The alternative, after all, is impotent silence. Some of these insights from the abyss may be profoundly true. But they are mainly

about us. What matters more is the grief and loss of families, and the defiant remembering of each life. This will be the proper focus of the next few days.

That said, I do come at these events from a religious perspective, as some of the victims surely did, and as some of their loved ones surely do. The Christian faith involves a whisper from beyond time that death, while horrible, is not final -- that the affirmations of the creeds and the inscriptions on tombstones are not lies. And for many, this hope is a barrier against despair.

Yet faith also encompasses something deeper and more difficult -- what theologian Jurgen Moltmann has called "God's terrible silence." In that silence, only the scarred God, the weak and victimized God, the God of the cross seems to communicate. Not in words, but in a shocking example of lonely suffering. Christians turn to a God who once felt godforsaken, as all of us may feel in the nightmare of loss.

At this type of moment, even those with tenuous ties to religion offer their thoughts and prayers. But how should we pray? Concerning grief, as many can attest, it is not strength or struggle that matters most; it is perseverance. And that is as good a thing to pray for as any, for those who cannot see

a future without their friend, without their child. Our attention is temporary; their suffering will not fade easily, if ever.

For the rest of us, there is the short, fragile unity found in sympathy. It is a good thing to take a break from hate and strife, to remember the victims and survivors and to recall our common vulnerability and humanity. There is ultimately no isolation from evil and death. But there is solidarity in facing the worst of it together, by caring for these people, our people, in their hour of loss.

Grief, it's been said, is the price of love. And events like this one naturally turn our minds to those we love. We are reminded by tragedy that life is temporary and precious. We hold others briefly in our arms, and try to reach out and shield them from harm. But it is the uncomfortable truth of our nature that our days together are counted and finite. And we should find a fierce pleasure in each one of them, even in those we think are the dullest and worst.

As time passes, of course, both our unity and sense of life's fragility will fade, which is also a truth of our nature. But they are somewhere, just below the surface, waiting to be summoned by joy or grief.

(Washington Post Writers Group)

other views

guest column

## Salem is wrong to ban sidewalk sitting

By GENE H. McINTYRE

Generalization. It's where a conclusion is reached based on insufficient evidence and without consideration of all the possible variables. It was one of my favorite tools from a young age, usually used unsuccessfully, where I wanted to do something or possess something and argued that everyone else had it or did it.

Another matter that is indisputably part of everyday modern life, at least in these United States, is divisiveness. Almost daily, and seemingly more often experienced since the inauguration of the current president, we find ourselves immersed in issues that lead to divergent points of view, dividing the American public into hostile camps characterized by bombastic name-calling and dire threats directed at those who differ in point of view.

This writer could choose from many issues of current status but narrows the list to homelessness. Case in point: the city of Salem proposed the following city ordinance: "It shall be unlawful for any person to sit or lie down upon a public sidewalk, or upon a blanket, chair or stool, or any other object placed upon a public sidewalk, during the hours between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m."

As it happened in 2009, an ordinance like the one proposed in Salem was another very similar to it proposed in Portland. In that case, a Multnomah

County Circuit Court ruled such a "sit-lie" ordinance unconstitutional because it was at odds with Oregon law. There was considerable negative feedback before city councilors rejected it. Among those who voiced opposition were townspeople, the Salem Area Chamber of Commerce, a city councilor, Salem's chief of police and Oregon's American Civil Liberties Union.

A representative sample from those who spoke regarding the proposed ordinance were statements such as that the "Proposal targets and dehumanizes the most vulnerable part of our population," "Compassion's needed for the homeless," "Salem can do more than it is already doing," "Respect for police who are just trying to fix a problem," and that "These kinds of ordinances violate individuals' right." No one spoke up in favor of it.

The city attorney, whose office prepared the Salem ordinance, declined to comment. Ultimately, Salem's city councilors voted that the city of Salem mayor establish a task force to study homelessness in downtown and North Salem. Unfortunately, this kind of referral action often means that a controversial proposal will find a convenient resting place in the graveyard of good intentions.

Nevertheless, what if the city of Salem, through leadership by the mayor and advisors, analyzed individ-

ual problems sufficient to tailor city actions with a high probability of success. First and foremost, what's given is that there is no one fit to achieve success for every homeless person; hence, keep the fallacy of generalization in mind. As case after case will reveal, homeless persons are homeless for many reasons, including, for example, mental health problems, physical health problems, lack of education/training, and an unwillingness to work.

If each homeless person has been individually interviewed and nothing's worked, after 'no stone's been left unturned,' then it would seem that an ordinance would only be approved to deal with lawbreakers and those able-bodied but unwilling to be trained for work and jobs. Otherwise, plans with the means to realize successful outcomes should be implemented, followed-up and accordingly adjusted when needed.

In the final analysis there must be ways and means to respect and protect normal street traffic where every American is free to go about his legal business while also finding resolution to the number among us in homeless circumstances. After all, while it may come across as Pollyannaish, this one, among so many divisive challenges in our nation today, is one that can be solved locally...should we decide to put our heads, hearts, wallets and know-how to the task.

(Gene H. McIntyre lives in Keizer.)

letters

## CERT training starting soon

To the Editor:

The idea for the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) came about in the 1980s in Los Angeles, California. The idea is that spontaneous and minimally trained volunteers can assist emergency service personnel during large disasters.

The 1985 Mexico City earthquake made it clear that spontaneous and untrained rescuers can greatly increase the ability of emergency services (they rescued 800 victims) but also have a high risk of becoming victims themselves (more than 100 rescuers died).

Keizer CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) is sponsored by Marion County Emergency Management and partners with Keizer Police Department and Keizer Fire District. The CERT class benefits attendees by teaching skills in basic disaster preparedness, fire safety and utilities controls, basic disaster medical care, light search and rescue, disaster psychology, terrorism and communication.

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training is a free community preparedness course that includes both academic and hands-on skills training. CERT training prepares you to

help yourself, your family and your co-workers in the event of a catastrophic disaster. Emergency personnel may not be able to help immediately and you can make a difference by using CERT training to save lives and protect property.

The training comes with no obligation to join the Keizer CERT team. You may take the course and use the information and skills in your personal life and, if you wish, join our team and become involved in monthly training as well as opportunities to support our community numerous times throughout the year.

Training sessions this year are on Saturdays, Oct. 14, Oct. 28 and Nov. 11. All sessions are scheduled for 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Keizer Fire hall at 661 Chemawa Rd. NE.

For more information email keizercert@comcast.net or call 503-551-2648.

Linda Pantalone, Coordinator  
Keizer CERT

## Disrespect for the flag is not patriotic

By WAYNE MORELAND

During the late 1960s and early '70s, we were told that the burning of the American flag, the spitting on returning members of the military, the burning of a ROTC building at the University of Oregon and the calling of police officers as pigs were all acceptable forms of protest and the exercise of free speech.

Well, it was disrespectful to the flag, the people and the nation. It was disrespectful then and it is disrespectful now. The disrespect began last year, before Donald Trump became President Trump. Granted, the speech the president made at a political rally (not a policy speech) made the matter front page stuff. But to blame the speech is to turn a blind eye to the actions from a year earlier.

It is said that who we are as an individual is the sum of our experiences that led us to this point in time. My experiences in law enforcement and in the U.S. Air Force have obviously brought me to a different place than the editor of this publication. I see no gray. Rather, I see the actions of the NFL and its players as blatant disrespect of this country and those who have served. If their issue was with the police, there are many officers at all their games that they could approach with their grievances. But, of course, it takes moral courage to do that.

Hardly a day goes by without news of a police officer somewhere being pictured while sticking their head into a burning car to rescue someone. And all too often, news of offi-

cers being slain doing their duty for their community. In fact, if you care to look, there's a memorial in front of the Public Service Bldg. in the Capitol Mall dedicated to Oregon State Police troopers who gave their life in service to the state of Oregon. Take a look sometime; I personally knew and worked with several of them. Are there some bad cops? Of course; I worked with a couple of them, too. But to disrespect the nation and the thousands of officers who serve and have served with pride and honor far outweighs the few that have made the news. And, incidentally, they weren't all bad. Remember "Hands up, don't shoot?" Well, court records indicate that didn't even happen.

As I write this, the headlines are all about the insanity in Las Vegas. And once again, there were uniformed po-

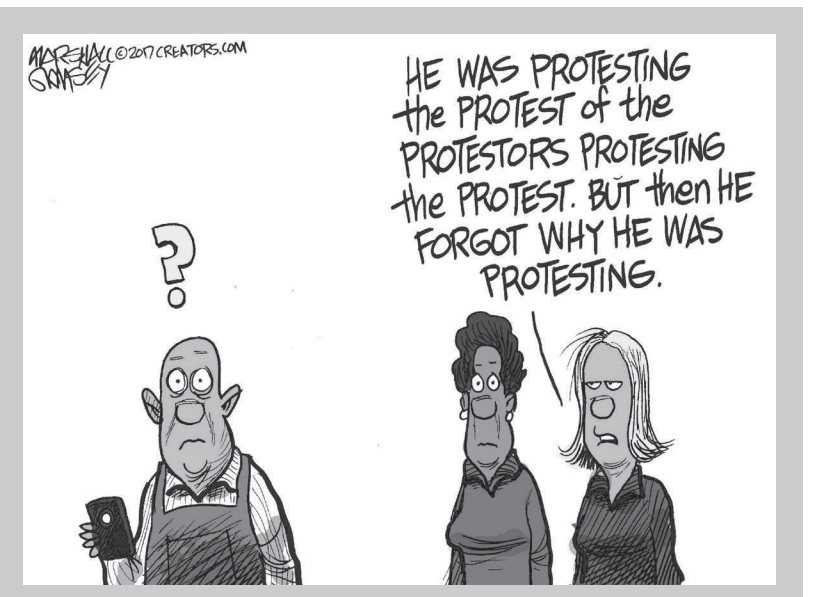
lice, fire, EMS and likely some military rushing towards that gunfire. Others remained at the scene to render aid, because it was the right thing to do. Let's see how the NFL complainers handle Las Vegas this weekend. If they continue to disrespect the people who do right, shame on them.

So be careful of who you name as the heroes and villains of today's America. Do the players and their ilk have the right to protest? Certainly. But when their protest adds to the division and disrespect of America, I'm done. After a fan of more than 70 years, I won't even look at the scores, yet alone another game.

And as to the president's speech, I find little difference between "The cops acted stupidly" and "John McCain was no hero." Disrespect is disrespect.

(Wayne A. Moreland lives in Keizer.)

guest opinion



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