

KeizerOpinion

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The promise

Few things hold such promise as the dawning of a new year. When the calendar turns to January 1, we shake off the old year and look to the new with a sense of optimism; all that we want to achieve in the next 12 months is as doable as any of the best laid plans.

Schools, governments and business generally have their own new year without benefit of the calendar. The school year begins anew each September; governments operate on a fiscal year that start in July or October; and businesses can choose to begin their year whenever they wish.

At the end of each year media outlets compile lists of the top stories and events of the previous 12 months, scrapbooking the year into neat little boxes and stories. We feel it is more important to look forward to what may be and what could be coming. The past is the past, all that man can do is learn from it.

Looking forward, Keizer residents and voters will have a busy year in 2018. The first election, for Measure 101, is on January 23 when voters will be asked to retain the Oregon legislature's temporary tax on hospitals, insurance companies and a few other groups to make up for a Medicaid funding shortfall in order to keep low-income Oregonians insured. Keizer and Oregon residents are like those in every other part of the nation—no one wants their taxes to increase or their health insurance premiums to go up. Measure 101 could result in that.

In May voters will pass judgment on the \$620 million bond for the proposed Long-Range Facilities Plan for Salem-Keizer School District. The Long-Range Facilities Plan is aimed at meeting schools' long term needs in areas such as capacity and building safety.

The May election is also a primary for state and county offices.

In November's general election, the city of Keizer will be voting on its mayor and three councilors.

It may seem like a lot of election ballots to peruse throughout the year, but the election results will shape the way we live here in Keizer. That is true especially regarding the growth of Keizer; there is a very good chance that the councilors who are serving starting in January 2019 will have a big say in whether or not our Urban Growth Bound-

ary will be expanded.

The future belongs to those that plan for it. It is easy to conclude that 2018 will be a big year for Keizer. The opening of the Walmart grocery store at Creekside Shopping Center will herald a revitalization of that faded retail development. Keizer households have been counting the days until Keizer's second grocery store opens its doors and offers prices that budget-minded consumers want.

The addition of a cinema at Keizer Station will bring entertainment choices to the city that residents have been clamoring for years, especially after Keizer Cinema closed in the 1990s.

The new year promises to be very good for Keizer and its residents. We have the amenities we need: streets, sewers, parks and schools. A former Keizer mayor used to say when it comes to spending money on public projects it comes down to 'must-have' and 'like-to-have.' If there is no money available after paying for the 'must haves,' then it falls on the city's private and philanthropic organizations to work on the 'like to haves.' A good example of that is Keizer's public art program, led by the Keizer Chamber Foundation.

A case can be made that Keizer has what it needs. If nothing was added or changed, most Keizerites would be happy with the status quo. That's a good situation for those who want to retain Keizer's quaint atmosphere.

Just as many wildlife animals are deep in hibernation until the thaws of spring, we humans will also hunker down in January and February, recuperate from the hectic holidays, recharge and get ready to attack life with gusto again come March. There is high school to graduate, colleges to apply to; many will seek new employment or buy a new house.

As we turn the calendar to a new year, each person will remember the good in the past, overlook the bad while planning and hoping for a year of personal prosperity for themselves and achievement for their school-age children. It's a promise the calendar makes to us and a promise we have to work at to make happen.

—LAZ

Bundy mistrial highlights distrust

By DEBRA SAUNDERS

As Washington conservatives question whether partisan FBI officials working for Special Counsel Robert Mueller have stacked the deck against President Donald Trump, a criminal case in Las Vegas points to the sort of federal prosecutorial abuses that give the right cause for paranoia.

Last week, U.S. District Judge Gloria Navarro declared a mistrial in the infamous 2014 Bunkerville standoff case against rancher Cliven Bundy, his sons Ammon and Ryan, and co-defendant Ryan Payne, on the grounds that federal prosecutors improperly withheld evidence.

The standoff, in which both sides were armed, was a national news story that pitted a Western rancher against federal officialdom. Bureau of Land Management officials had tried to seize Bundy's cattle following a decades-long dispute over grazing fees. The rancher had stopped paying federal grazing fees in 1993 to protest a BLM directive that he cut back on cattle grazing in order to accommodate the threatened desert tortoise.

In the course of the trial, Navarro found that prosecutors failed to share video surveillance, maps and FBI interview reports with defense attorneys. "A mistrial in this case is the most suitable and only remedy available," Navarro explained.

As the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* reported, the judge stressed that she did not want her decision to be seen as a signal that the defendants are not guilty.

Navarro's decision apparently was a reflection on federal officials. It follows release of a memo by BLM investigator Larry Wooten that described "a widespread pattern of bad judgment, lack of discipline, incredible bias, unprofessionalism and misconduct, as well as likely policy, ethical and legal violations among senior and supervisory staff" in the BLM's Office of Law Enforcement and Security.

Wooten wrote that he had seen "excessive force," described officers grinding Bundy's son Dave's face in gravel and opined that federal officials were intent on commanding "the most intrusive, oppressive, large scale and militaristic cattle impound possible."

In an apparently partisan reference that used a term Hillary Clinton designated for some of Trump's supporters, Wooten wrote that a federal prosecutor said, let's get these "shall we say Deplorables."

(Likewise FBI agent Peter Strzok and FBI lawyer Lisa Page, who worked on Mueller's probe into Russian interference in the 2016 election, shared texts in which they called Trump a "loathsome human." Mueller removed Strzok after he learned of the texts.)

Wooten also wrote that the Bundy case "closely mirrors" the circumstances behind the trial of former Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska.

In 2008, federal prosecutors indicted Stevens, a Republican senator, for failing to report that an oil contractor had paid for renovations on his Alaska cabin. A jury convict-

ed Stevens, who lost the re-election.

Only later did the case fall apart after a Department of Justice probe found prosecutors had withheld exculpatory evidence. Attorney General Eric Holder, who inherited the case after President Barack Obama won the White House, asked the courts to throw out the conviction.

Wooten is no fan of Cliven Bundy who, he wrote, instead of "properly using the court system or other avenues to properly address his grievances, he chose an illegal, uncivilized and dangerous strategy in which a tragedy was narrowly and thankfully avoided."

Tragedy was not averted in the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon last year when law enforcement shot and killed Robert "LaVoy" Finicum during a Bundy-inspired showdown.

"Clearly Bundy should not be made out to be some kind of hero," observed Jim Burling, vice president of the property-rights oriented Pacific Legal Foundation. "But BLM and DOJ are doing everything they can to turn Bundy into some kind of martyr and they're giving him far more credibility than he should be given."

Attorney General Jeff Sessions takes the matter seriously. According to spokesman Ian Prior, Sessions "personally directed that an expert in the Department's discovery obligations be deployed to examine the case and advise as to next steps."

As for the Justice Department, said Burling, "If they want to enforce the law, they should look at the mirror first."

(Creators Syndicate)

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Residents should help decide how to grow city

By GENE H. MCINTYRE

The question asked on the front page of the December 8 issue of the *Keizertimes* hopefully will motivate every Keizer resident to get involved in deciding how and where our city grows. The issue most certainly got me reflecting on how relatively easy it has been to get around this town but how that condition is changing and will predictably become so much more challenging if we do not plan and act wisely.

A considerable stroke of pure genius was the decision to occupy—for multiple retail and living space use nearby—that area named Keizer Station bordering Lockhaven Drive, Ridge Drive, I-5 and the south side of Volcanoes Stadium. Keizer Station reminds me of my early days as a school teacher in Beaverton, having Portland's then newly-built Lloyd Center, where there was always a place to park, it was crime-free and it offered the only one-stop shopping in Oregon at the time. At present, shopping malls may be on the decline elsewhere while Keizer Station is one that will be viably-important for years to come.

River Road North is getting more and more congested and thereby increasingly difficult to negotiate as a result of businesses along it where—as just one example—drivers think it's okay to block the street so they can get their coffee. Keizer police could start issuing tickets but that's a negative for them when it should be a business responsibility to establish a site that

does not impede traffic. Conditions we have already, and growing, along River Road North, could be curtailed if a proactive city council and mayor would not permit traffic-impeding conditions.

While we've still got a measure of time, we should move as much business by incentive to Keizer Station and increase available space there so that new or existing businesses can locate or re-locate there instead of River Road. At the same time, more high rise apartment buildings for seniors (such as Bonaventure at Keizer Station) and the general population should be built in what could become a much larger space for all investors interested in developing retail space and apartment buildings.

Keizer Station is rapidly expanding and will continue to grow as Keizer's population grows and more traffic uses Interstate 5. It would appear urgent then to negotiate with Volcanoes Stadium to help its owners relocate, although it may require eminent domain to get it done. Then, too, there's open land immediately to the west of the ball park and some, too, just north of it before farmland that could be incorporated into an expanded shopping center as we move through the years of growth and development predicted to come and, to one degree or another, has already arrived.

Regarding this subject, most certainly a case for civil engineering and road work should be a part of development deliberations. All paths to Keizer Station become heavily congested before holidays

and often during certain times of any day. Woodburn Company Stores became a dangerous exit before the highway improvements were made. This is the time to get started for Keizer Station, not only for its freeway location but also access by the Salem Parkway NE as well as Chemawa and Lockhaven Drive.

Another casualty of letting things grow topsy turvy is the rich farmland near Keizer's city limits, that land adjoining it and the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). The entire nation keeps using up rich farm land to house people on city lots and acreage when it would seem proactively wise to ask how we'll eventually feed everyone when land to grow fruit, vegetables and farm animals is covered with people living on it. It's truly a matter that's ignored at what promises human peril.

Hope proactive over reactive becomes a well-established Keizer modus operandi. Otherwise, we give our next generation big problems we likely could have done a whole lot about. One final thought here: talk, persuade, cajole a large grocery, pharmacy, clothing, electronics, jewelry store to be built inside Keizer Station. That would be a crowning apex to a shopping location that could be among the very best in Oregon and the Pacific Northwest.

(Gene H. McIntyre lives in Keizer.)

Share your opinion

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