

KeizerOpinion

KEIZERTIMES.COM

Honoring multi-taskers

The Keizer Chamber of Commerce held its annual First Citizen banquet last Saturday and they hit it out of the park with the four who won awards.

Joe Egli was announced as Keizer's First Citizen Award to sustained applause. The creators seemed to have Egli in mind when they conceived of the award. Few First Citizens have had their fingerprints in so many different areas of Keizer life. His resume is dizzying.

A life-long Oregonian and a long-time Keizerite Egli has served in public capacities, committee member; he served one term as a Keizer City Councilor.

A born leader, Egli has served as president of both the Keizer Chamber of Commerce and the Keizer Rotary Club. But it is in his role as resident he has displayed his most far-reaching influence. Every major project in Keizer over the past two decades has had Egli as a cheerleader. His gift for rallying support and volunteers for projects as diverse as The Big Toy, the artificial turf at McNary High School, leadership of the Iris Festival and his the Salem-Keizer Education Foundation is legendary.

Egli and his wife Shelly comprise one of the most productive teams when it comes to their home. He does what is needed to be done without seeking the spotlight or credit. As he said himself as he accepted his award, it's all about the people in Keizer. Yes, it certainly is, Mr. Egli.

The pattern to the awards seemed to be multi-tasking. The Merchant of the Year award was presented to Larry Jackson of Jackson's Body Shop. When volunteers are called for, Jackson is one of the first in line. He serves on the board of directors for the Chamber and volunteers as one of the Men of Action in Keizer (MAK). Christmas displays? Does it. Iris Festival? Does it. Big Toy? Did it.

Larry Jackson was very deserving of the Merchant of the Year award and he will continue his good civic works and continue to inspire others to pitch in and help in his community. For that the community thanks you, Larry.

Another multi-tasker honored Saturday night was Jason Flores who was presented with the Service to Education Award. Over the years this award has been bestowed on teachers, administrators, coaches and boosters—all of whom have had a positive impact on Keizer's school kids.

A residential builder (Celtic Homes, LLC), Flores devotes just as much time to Keizer kid's sports as he does to his own business. For

more than 15 years he has coached baseball, softball and football for youth teams. Along with coaching and mentoring he has also been deeply involved with projects such as the Keizer Little League fields, the turf, refurbished scoreboard and softball dugout projects at McNary High School.

Like all good volunteers he puts money where his heart is. He and his wife Keri sponsor students in their chosen sport through the McNary Athletic Booster Club's Adopt-an-Athlete program.

Youth sports in Keizer are a success due in part to community volunteers like Jason Flores.

At their discretion, the Chamber of Commerce leaders present their President's Award. The recipients of this award over the years have been a varied group who have made indelible impacts on the Chamber and the city.

Nathan Bauer, president of the Chamber's board of directors, made an impassioned speech before announcing he was honoring Matthew Lawyer, who was stunned by the announcement.

Matthew Lawyer is the future of Keizer volunteering and leadership. A man who doesn't know how to say no, can be found involved with community projects as well as projects that are his personal passion—he is a board member of Keizer Home-grown Theatre (he has quite the stage presence).

On the public side he serves on the Keizer Parks and Recreation Advisory Board where his passion for the city's parks is evident at every meeting. He has a young family and his concerns mirror those of most Keizer households, which is important.

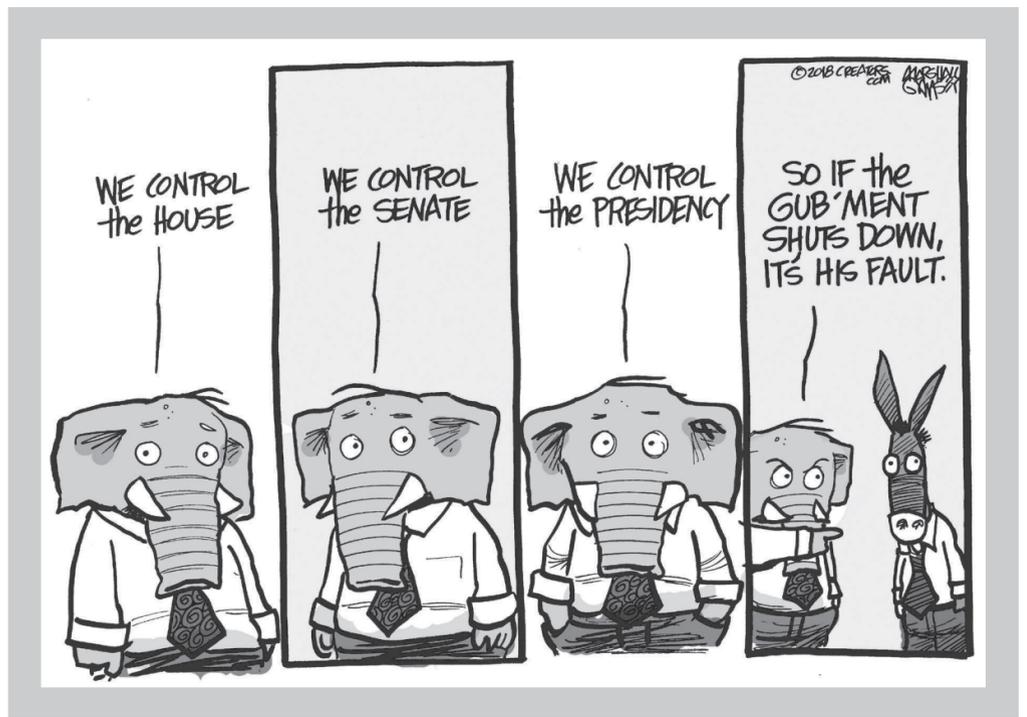
He is also a member of the Keizer Planning Commission, one of the most important bodies in the city. The commission is the first step in the process for developers and contractors to get green lit by the city council for their projects. His sober, realistic views will be valuable when time comes to seriously discuss future growth in the guise of an Urban Growth Boundary expansion.

What does any of this have to do with the Keizer Chamber of Commerce? Everything...when you help make the city a great place to live and run a business, that's the Chamber's mission. Full stop.

Congratulations to all the recipients of this year's awards.

—LAZ

our opinion



Government can work

By E.J. DIONNE JR.

Episodes of congressional disarray feed an ideologically loaded narrative that government is hopelessly incompetent and can never be counted on to do much that is useful.

Even if President Trump and the Republicans ultimately come to bear the burden for Washington's disarray, episodes of this sort bolster the standard conservative view of government as a lumbering beast whose "meddling" only fouls things up. The private sector is cast as virtuously efficient and best left alone.

The power of this anti-government bias is enhanced by our failure to revisit government's successes. We don't often call out those who wrongly predict that activist politicians and bureaucrats will bring on nothing but catastrophe.

This is why conservatives would rather lock up the government rescue of General Motors and Chrysler under President Obama in a memory hole. In the end, taxpayers invested some \$80 billion in the rescue and recouped all but approximately \$10 billion of that. And that figure does not take into account the taxes paid by workers who might otherwise have been unemployed.

Remember that when this was debated, critics insisted that the federal government could not possibly understand a complicated business and that it would turn the auto companies into some kind of patronage dumping ground.

If the bailout happened, Mitt Romney famously wrote, "you can kiss the American automotive industry goodbye." Rush Limbaugh accused Obama of trying to "take over" the American

auto companies in order to turn them into "another industry doing his bidding." Former Sen. Jon Kyl, R-Ariz., said the bailout would amount to throwing good money after bad. "Just giving them \$25 billion doesn't change anything," he said in November 2008, citing the estimated upfront cost at the time of saving the companies. "It just puts off for six months or so the day of reckoning."

In fact, in the most capitalist of terms, the initiative worked spectacularly well. Auto sales rose for seven straight years starting in 2010, before finally taking a small dip in 2017. On May 29, 2009, GM stock cratered to 75 cents a share—yes, 75 cents. The restructured company went public again in 2010 at \$33 a share, and it was trading at around \$43 a share last week. Fiat Chrysler, the merged company that came out of the government-led restructuring, debuted on the New York Stock Exchange at \$9 a share in October 2014 and is now trading in the range of \$24 a share.

Although Obama organized the details of the rescue and took the heat for it, former President George W. Bush deserves some credit here. While he was initially reluctant to do so, Bush responded to Obama's desire to keep the future of the companies open. He eventually fronted GM and Chrysler some \$25 billion from the funds set aside for the bank bailouts after the economic implosion.

Bush said in December 2008, "If we were to allow the free market to take its course now, it would almost certainly lead to disorderly bankruptcy." For such a staunch capitalist, it was a

the opinion of others

candid—one might say courageous—admission that the market, operating on its own, would create chaos.

And this bedlam would have taken a severe human and social toll, since the job losses from that "disorderly bankruptcy" would have hit not only the auto companies themselves but also their suppliers and other enterprises, large and small, that served them.

Instead, Michigan, along with other parts of the region, has staged an impressive comeback. The state's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate peaked at 14.9 percent in June 2009, fell to 5.1 percent by December 2016, and has continued to drop, to 4.6 percent last November. In Detroit itself, unemployment declined from 28.4 percent in June 2009 to 7.8 percent in November 2017.

Wages, it should be said, have not fully recovered from the Great Recession. The real median household income in Michigan stood at \$57,910 in 2006, sank through 2010, when it hit \$50,943, and was at \$57,091 in 2016. So there's still work to do. But imagine what the trends would look like if government had made the irreversible choice of letting GM and Chrysler go under.

The price of our collective amnesia about the moments when public action kept capitalism from flying off the rails is very high. Once a crisis is over, extreme forms of deregulation return to fashion and our political discourse falls lazily back into cheap government bashing. That Trump and Congress sometimes make this easy is no excuse for forgetting why government is there.

(Washington Post Writers Group)

Elitism is the stick in the spokes of democracy

By GENE H. MCINTYRE

Elitism. It is a powerful word. Recently that word has been brought up in a nationally-syndicated opinion column with disparaging comment that it should be drummed out of Americans and all things American. Defined, it refers to a group that is considered superior to the remaining members of the group in terms of ability and qualities, and is also used to identify those in the group having the greatest power and influence within a society due to their wealth and privilege.

My reading of the U.S. Constitution, its companion document, the Bill of Rights, and our nation's laws and related applications, is that there has been an effort from the beginning to drive a stake through the heart of elitism even though those persons responsible for getting the United States underway in the late 18th century could be viewed as the elites in Colonial America, those who led the Revolutionary War and the ultimate break from England's rule. Incidentally, in every person's inimitable way he's an elitist: it's the human nature in all of us that's inclined to judge other persons as below us or inferior.

Recorded history of the world could be described as people—back to the Egyptians—and even earlier, surrendering their lives to elites by permitting themselves to be ruled by the elites. These would have been the pharaohs, the emperors, the czars, the kings and queens and the rulers back to the birth of civilizations. In fact, world history suggests that the human species has items in its DNA, resulting in surrender of freedom, and the right

of every member to protect himself in return for control by the most wealthy and powerful in their midst.

In North America and throughout the world of yesteryear, humans struck out on their own to escape control as one can learn by reading about those who ventured away from civilizations east of Polynesia and settled the Pacific Ocean, the tribes that used the once-solid bridge of land between Asia and what is now Alaska, and the pilgrims of Europe, England, and the Netherlands, that sailed away to religious freedom in what became colonial America. People, virtually forever, have wanted freedom but sooner or later have surrendered to controls by the elites in their societies, those richest in goods and greatest in power.

We bring our loss of freedom and self-determination on ourselves because we want a measure of safety and security we are not able to provide for ourselves. If we do as we please and, in doing so, break the law then we face the consequence of fine or imprisonment. If we set out into hinterlands to establish our own little fiefdom, we soon are held responsible for what we do by a force more powerful than ourselves that comes to us because all of America, deep in the woods and out in deserts, is owned or controlled by the most wealthy and powerful among us.

We cannot therefore avoid or escape elitism. These elitists dictate whether we like it or not because these are the people among us who have managed—by inheritance, hard work, mental ability—to accumulate the most wealth and power.

guest column

Although we argue we are a nation of laws, not men, we end up in daily life by subtle or direct control, or simply surrender, to those, we choose by voting in America, often with the most wealth and power. Reminder: We recognize, too, it is in the nature of most all of us to view virtually everyone else as, by subjective judgment, lesser than ourselves.

The average American can do little about his plight of powerlessness except by pen, voice and vote. If I'd been granted what's required to stand tall among those with wealth and power, I might have had more power and privilege other than effort at persuasion by columns. I am not wealthy and thereby not powerful but appreciate the fact that I can openly express my ideas in a nation that generally respects its Constitution enough to allow me to do it. Elsewhere, I could be incarcerated or murdered, although the level of intolerance for expressions "too contrary" or "blasphemous" can get a person "in deep trouble" here.

Elitism is here and here to stay and has been since the "beginning of time." There's no way in modern times to rid ourselves of it because our planet has been "civilized" from stem to stern. And there's no way to escape, not even by death, as the authorities will do with my body as law dictates. But not to despair! As is true of all Americans, the nationally syndicated writer who disparages those he views as elitists has the freedom to criticize "them," as do we all. Meanwhile and always, the American freedom of speech is precious powerful and must be protected at all cost from those who would demagogue or dictate.

(Gene H. McIntyre lives in Keizer.)

No more soap

Don Vowell, a long-time contributor to this page with his *A Box of Soap* column passed away on Dec. 15. His irreverent writing will be dearly missed.

Vowell, who retired as a carrier for the U.S. Postal Service, enjoyed mixing things up and making people think. His frequent columns certainly did that. His writings amused many but some of his writings also rose the ire of others. That's what writing should do: elicit emotion.

In his retirement years he turned to natural photography. He had the patience of a saint, waited for hours to get just the right photograph. He posted many on his Facebook page. You would be hard pressed to tell the difference between a Don Vowell

wildlife shot and a wildlife shot in a *National Geographic* magazine.

Don had a whimsical look on life and shared it widely. With tongue firmly planted in cheek he considered running for mayor back in the 1990s. He even had a campaign logo: Join the Vowell Movement. Needless to say, his political career never got off the ground.

We enjoyed his columns because we never knew what he was going to address. He covered a myriad of subjects over the dozens of columns that ran for more than 20 years.

Don Vowell's voice will be missed, but his columns will live on in our archives and our hearts.

—LAZ

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SUBSCRIPTIONS
One year,
\$25 in Marion County,
\$33 outside Marion County,
\$45 outside Oregon

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY
Publication No: USPS 679-430

POSTMASTER
Send address changes to:
Keizertimes Circulation
142 Chemawa Road N.
Keizer, OR 97303

Periodical postage paid at
Salem, Oregon



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