

# KeizerOpinion

KEIZERTIMES.COM

## Keeping Keizer great takes vigilance on all levels

Most people who make Keizer their home made a conscientious decision to live here. They are raising their families or living the retirement lifestyle. There is much to recommend Keizer as a place to call home.

Some may lament what Keizer does not have but the goods far outweigh the bads. Our city is led and operated by a dedicated group of people both on the electoral and staff levels; there really is not much a resident requires other than what is offered currently.

It is an easy task to rebuff those who say there is nothing to do in Keizer. One need only point to our 19 parks, all the sports organizations plus a professional baseball team. Arts? Keizer has it. A lot of it. The Keizer Art Association's Enid Joy Mount Gallery stages a new exhibition every month. During the academic year every school presents a wide variety of concerts and plays.

In short Keizer is a wonderful place to live. But, Keizer is not an island. We cannot shut the gate at our borders and tell the rest of the world to go away. We may be Keizerites but we are also patriotic Americans supporting the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights. We look to our governments to defend us and keep us safe—if it did nothing else, we would be satisfied.

The American people of every ideological stripe, of every economic level should be shocked that our Commander in Chief remarked that the United States might get a shot at having a leader for life someday. Was it a joke? If doesn't matter. The leader of a free country who is elected by the people and limited to two terms has no business musing about a leader for life either in public or private. Such a thought shouldn't even exist.

Our president has expressed admiration for China's Xi Jinping and other authorian leaders. China's two-term limit was eliminated, allowing Jinping to serve as president for China as long as he can.

We live in a country of laws and our leaders swear to an oath that they will defend and protect the Constitution of the United States, that includes leaders at our local level.

Some may say that the Constitution is a living document and was designed to be amended and changed (we're up to 27 amendments now including the first ten which comprise the Bill of Rights). We hope that life in America never gets so complex and complicated that the citizens completely turn over their right to choose their leader to a small cabal.

Though only half of eligible voters cast a ballot in presidential elections, it is still an election. Voting turnout rates on the local level are even smaller.

When the people take their eye off the governmental ball there will always be some that will take up the slack. When statesman, writers and historians say that mankind's greatest experiment is America and its democracy, too many tune that out.

The documents that give people the right to keep and bear arms, to marry someone of another faith or race, to read and say what they like and to travel anywhere is the same document that lays out how we elect our national leader and how long that leader can remain in office.

Is this a Keizer issue? Absolutely. It's an issue that is important in every nook and cranny of this nation. Some American citizens may never vote in any election, they may not even care about government politics. It doesn't matter, they are still citizens of the United States and have the same protections and rights as everyone. One's citizen status does not rely on one's voting history.

One of the problems of not voting, especially for president, is that everyone who does vote in those elections has an outsized influence. To the victor go the spoils, we, as a people, have to assure the victor never views themselves as indispensable and therefore deserving of serving for life.

—LAZ

our opinion

## Students studying states

To the Editor:

My name is Keira and I am a 6th grader at Faith Christian School in Kearney, Neb. My class is studying the 50 states and I have chosen Oregon as my state.

Our assignment is to find out as much about our states as we can and I would like your readers to help me out. I hope they will send me information about Oregon: maps, brochures, souvenirs or anything else that would be helpful.

letters

We will be having our States Fair at the end of the school year to display all of our information.

I look forward to receiving information about Oregon. It can be mailed to:

Mr. Van Winkle's  
5th-6th Grade Class

Faith Christian School  
PO Box 3048  
Kearney, NE 68848  
Attn: Keira

Kip Van Winkle  
Kearney, NE



## School bond is big, but important

By CHUCK LEE

We have overcrowding issues throughout the Salem-Keizer School District that will only worsen if we don't act quickly and effectively.

Our student population is growing at the same moment our facilities are aging and overtaxed.

You need to go no further to see the seriousness of our space issues than to visit Keizer Elementary School during any lunch period. There you will see our kids bunched up in a packed corridor, waiting to have a quick moment at the salad bar or to be served a hot lunch from a line that brings to mind a freight train with no ca-boose in sight.

Despite sincere efforts to accommodate the lunchtime surge, there are simply too many hungry kids in too small of an area.

For lack of cafeteria space, many students carry their trays through the school and wind back to their schoolroom desks to eat. Even though the students try hard to avoid messes, mishaps are inevitable, kids being kids.

Keizer students deserve better, and a solution is just three months away.

The 2018 school bond measure, to be decided in May, addresses the need for not just more cafeterias but more classrooms, more science

labs, more gyms and fitness areas, more commons areas, and more vocational-technical career spaces.

The bond will provide a direct response to some of the more vexing societal problems we face here in Keizer and across the country: the need for more STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) courses, the shocking rise of childhood obesity, and the need for a well-trained workforce to fill jobs in construction, digital design, automotive body repair, cosmetology and more.

In my work as president of our Career Technical Education Center (CTEC), I've seen what can happen when high school kids are provided with state-of-the-art facilities and instruction. Graduation rates soar.

The school bond will provide a major boost to technical and vocational education across the district, placing us in a position of leadership in Oregon.

But there's more.

Some \$99 million will go toward keeping our kids safe, strengthening spaces that are of high risk of collapse in an earthquake, upgrading badge access and intercom systems, and relocating or renovating front offices at 34 schools.

We are at a moment in history when traumatic events are forcing

communities to re-evaluate risks. The bond measure will defray the costs of school security at a time when it is a daily dinner table conversation topic.

Finally, this much-needed measure meets a long-held goal of mine. As a Keizer resident and school board member representing our community's interests, I've pressed for expansion at McNary High, rather than see the construction of a new area high school to replace it.

This expansion will keep Keizer high school students in Keizer, and the bond will allow for sufficient onsite parking on the campus, which will eliminate the practice of students parking in nearby neighborhoods. Please remember that when your ballots arrive in the mail.

When the bond passes, as I believe it will, McNary will benefit significantly, as will our middle and elementary schools.

Yes, the bond measure is big: \$619.2 million. But I ask that you take the time before Election Day to familiarize yourself with the scope of the measure and how a wave of critically important improvements will roll across the district. If we fail to act, the problems won't disappear. And projections almost guarantee our student population will expand.

We have the capability to meet the challenges head on. Vote yes. (Chuck Lee represents Keizer on the Salem-Keizer Schools Board.)

guest column

gene h. mcintyre

## Is democracy losing ground in the US?

In America we may now have come to a crossroads as to how we want our government to be organized and run, if, among some of us, we want any government at all. Our history lessons, from the nation's founding, report that those former colonists able to vote, narrowly voted in favor of the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights, while heated debate has preceded and followed the adoption of every amendment since.

A reading of our history discloses many a subsequent development that was generally unacceptable in that fateful year, 1776. A short list of those issues would have to include an end to slavery, suffrage for women, and full citizenship status for African-Americans. Further, our democracy goes on with debate after debate on every new major issue, most recently exemplified by gun controls and health insurance for every American.

One debated issue in more recent years has been labeled, "creeping socialism." The debate mainly originates from the establishment of Social Security and other federal work and aid programs that came into existence during the Depression. It continues to this day and has been nationally heightened during the first year of the Donald Trump administration as the president, his cabinet and "Trump Party" members proceed with the wish to move Social Security to private ownership and sharply defund—if not terminate—other federal programs such as Medicare, Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act.

In America, there are a considerable number of citizens alarmed and anxious over what may be viewed as "creeping totalitarianism." There are examples throughout the world of well-established totalitarian states

found in most of Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe. Their number is so large as to discourage their listing here in limited space. As long as the Constitution with the Bill of Rights, our government of checks and balances and our governmental institutions and agencies remain in place, then our democracy is safe. Unfortunately, these long-standing safeguards against corruptions in U.S. government are under attack and thereby threatened.

Three novelists, a Canadian, a Brit and an American, have written fictional trips that take the reader into dystopian places through novels such as Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, George Orwell's *1984* and Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. Dystopian stories are usually stories about survival where the main theme is oppression and rebellion. Dystopian stories take place in nations devastated by pollution while war, revolutions, overpopulation and other disasters abound. Only three of these dystopian stories are mentioned here; however, there are many others in this genre an internet search can find.

The institution of the family is eradicated in some of these stories where children are reproduced artificially and romantic love is forbidden. The stories emphasize the powerlessness of the individual in the face of demeaning oppression and brutal government policies controlled by totalitarian dictators. Paranoia is ubiquitous among the citizens of dystopian societies who live in fear and are totally manipulated. For example, in *The Handmaid's Tale*, women have no rights, in *1984* love is forbidden so when the main character finds it he is ultimately brainwashed to feel affection only for Big Brother, and *Fahrenheit 451* is set in a place where all books

are burned.

Our nation has made great strides over the years in an ongoing effort for Americans to embrace the American Dream; yet, it remains out of reach for millions. Conditions such as racism, inequality, inferior educational opportunities, diminished upward mobility and the concentration of wealth and power has found its way into the hands of a tiny minority that works against new membership.

What's "creeping" at high velocity is the ubiquitous corruption by government officials who swore an oath upon assuming office to protect and preserve the United States of America. Par and parcel of what's happening promises to further divide our nation and is enhanced by the constant din from the country's leader and his devoted followers who claim fake news and witchcraft through use of prevarications. Hence, corruption is public service, lies are truth, and dead ends are opportunity.

So, we've reached a very serious place. Will the values and traditions brought by the U.S. Constitution and our "better angels" sufficiently rally us to save ourselves or will the greatest idea ever proposed, the one penned by our founders to establish and maintain 'liberty and justice for all,' be sustained or join the dustbin of history. The 11th hour has arrived while delayed action could bring America to a place, having caused so that's irreversible, there can be no reversal.

(Gene H. McIntyre lives in Keizer.)

## Share your opinion

Email a letter to the editor (300 words) by noon Tuesday.  
Email to:  
publisher@keizertimes.com



# Keizertimes

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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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