

KeizerOpinion

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Fostering hope

Six hundred people out of a total of 333,000 doesn't seem like a lot—actually, it seems like a puny amount, until you realize it is the number of foster kids in all of Marion County.

That relatively small number takes on major importance when we understand that those 600 or so foster children reside in less than 75 foster homes. Total. That means some homes have up to five foster children, a number that most experts agree is too high and does not serve the children well.

May is National Foster Care Month, which brings the foster system to mind. Foster care isn't just one month, it is every month, sometimes for years.

It is unfortunate that the only information some get about foster care are the tragic stories of abusive foster parents or horrifically unsanitary living conditions. The reality is that for every terrible story there are dozens of untold positive, hopeful, good stories about caring and committed foster parents. These are the people that become foster providers out of a sense of duty and need.

Another reality is that the system is in need of foster homes. Many more. It is a big ask, but foster homes are needed to serve the many children who enter the system each year. By most measures being a foster parent is not easy, especially if more than one child is placed at one home. Becoming a foster parent is certainly the epitome of unselfishness. In a world that constantly heralds the well-being of our children, it would seem that those who talk should also

do some of the walk.

What are the reasons one wouldn't become a foster parent? Choose one: too busy, too many children already, disrupts lifestyle and on and on.

There are some who should not be foster parents and there are those who see dollar signs when they think of foster kids. The foster care system should not be an entrepreneurial enterprise.

There are many reasons to become a foster parent. Primarily, the need. It is unfathomable that up to five kids are in a single foster home. The daily quality of life for kids who have been through too much will be greatly enhanced when they share a home with a nuclear family and perhaps only one other foster child.

How does one become a foster parent? First, contact the state Department of Human Services, which oversees foster care in Oregon. The agency will fully inform any interested people on the hows and whys of becoming a foster.

CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) is another avenue to help children in Marion County. CASA of Marion County advocates for abused and neglected children who need safe and permanent homes. Volunteers are trained to give them the skills and knowledge necessary to advocate for an abused child.

Children are our greatest natural resource and they all need to be nurtured, kept safe and allowed to live a life free from want and pain.

— LAZ

our opinion

Restore BOLI with Ogden

To the Editor:

I think we all agree that we need to restore to the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) the sense of balance between law enforcement and promotion of a healthy business climate. That is why I urge voters of all stripes to vote for Lou Ogden.

Mr. Ogden, unlike his principal opponent, has owned a business subject to the jurisdiction of BOLI. He knows first-hand the type of impact regulations passed by the legislature and enhanced through administrative rules promulgated by the Bureau exert on businesses both small and large. Businesses forced to focus on compliance have little time to innovate and grow to become all they want to be.

Mr. Ogden has also been on the front line of the effort to make at least a portion of Oregon a great place to work and do business. The City of Tualatin has flourished during the 17 years he has been its mayor to become one of the most desirable communities in which to live. The city exemplifies the great balance between residential and industrial interests that lure both to settle there and prosper.

Mr. Ogden is also the only candidate who has learned how to think as a non-partisan. Despite his opponent's efforts to show otherwise, she cannot escape the bonds that tie her to the partisan leadership roles she has relished in the legislature. It's time to restore balance to BOLI. It's time for Lou Ogden.

Davis I. Dyer
Keizer

Iris Festival 2018

To the Editor:

A couple of thoughts about the Iris Festival:

First, the new signs are a huge improvement over the confusing "Check it Out" banners of the past few years. And, the parade—gaps and all—is a very good thing. But, the carnival. Must there be one? And, if there must be one, there must be a better place for it than the Cherry Avenue location.

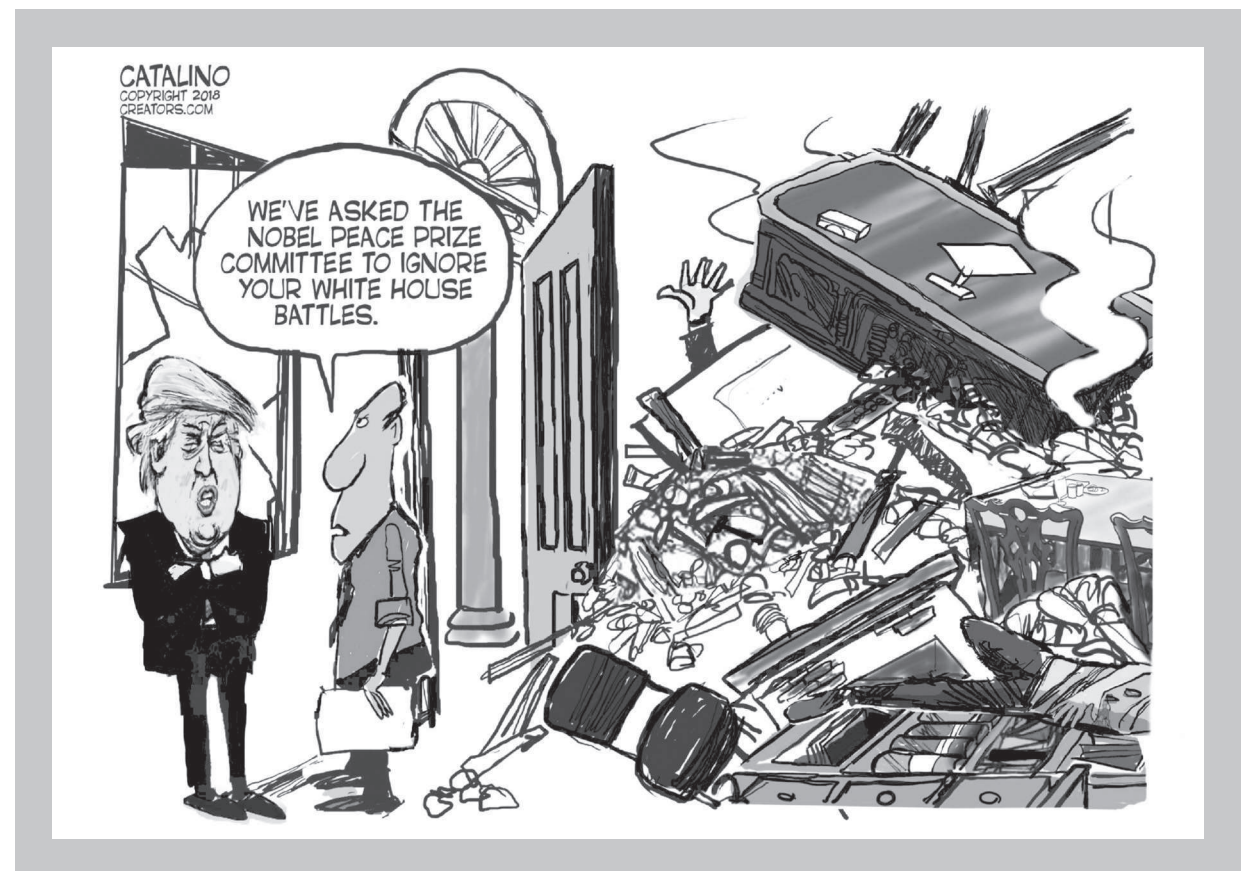
I shed no tears for the pot shops that are inconvenienced by the carnival, but Gonzalo Cervantes has finally reopened Pronto Signs after years of hard work and does not deserve another giant hassle, even a temporary one.

Without being privy to the details of his lease, it seems to me that Jerry Walker should demonstrate his civic pride and volunteer the parking lot at Volcano Stadium for the carnival. Baseball season has yet to begin and surely one less Spa Sale or Motor Home Liquidation would not break the bank. Failing the Walker offer, it seems to me the best solution would be mixing the carnival and putting up the beer and entertainment tent somewhere "downtown" with adequate parking and access to food. Of course, my opinion counts for very little and I would welcome push back from a cotton candy smeared 12-year-old with a hankering for a dizzy spell.

Martin Doerfler
Keizer

letters

the opinions of others



Spooking the next top spook

By DEBRA J. SAUNDERS

The U.S. Senate faces a clear choice as it prepares to confirm—or reject—acting CIA Director Gina Haspel as the permanent head spook.

Confirm Haspel and get a chief who will encourage staff to do their utmost to uncover what they need to know to protect this country. Or, reject her and prepare to settle for a cover-your-head-and keep-your-head-down bureaucrat whose chief selling point is not sticking out.

Of course, Haspel—President Donald Trump's pick to replace former director and current Secretary of State Mike Pompeo—is in for a lonely slog in her bid to become the rare career CIA officer to take the helm and the first female CIA chief. Trump critics smell blood.

The left has begun to organize an opposition campaign likely to keep Democratic senators from supporting Haspel. Meanwhile, Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul, one of 51 GOP senators, has said he opposes Haspel, and other GOP senators are on the fence.

And it's because Haspel put national security first.

Under President George W. Bush, Haspel authorized the use of enhanced interrogation techniques, including waterboarding, which was used on three al-Qaida detainees. She was acting in accordance with Department of Justice memos that found harsh interrogation methods to be legal.

What critics call "the torture memos," the CIA refers to "as the

not-torture memos," noted former agency spokesman Bill Harlow.

In 2018, the memos are a distant memory and critics breezily can dismiss CIA staffers who were desperate to prevent another 9/11 as torturers.

Did the same human rights activists who found the harsh methods inhumane protest when President Barack Obama, one of their own, stepped up the use of drones? Some did. Others remained more indignant about methods authorized under a Republican president that were painful for detainees than methods authorized by his Democratic successor that outright killed terror suspects.

Haspel's other big sin is her role in the destruction of videotapes that showed the waterboarding of two detainees. In 2005, she drafted a memo that advocated destroying the tapes. Her boss, then director of clandestine services, Jose Rodriguez, issued the memo and the tapes were destroyed. Investigators under Bush and Obama found no laws had been broken.

To the American Civil Liberties Union, this destruction of tapes that likely would have become a handy propaganda tool for al-Qaida is a bad thing, a denial of "transparency on torture."

On an ACLU conference call, national political director Faiz Shakir told reporters, "This is an opportunity to demonstrate what the resistance looks like." The resistance is the term Democrats use for obstructing Trump's agenda.

With its flaws, democracy is best system

Some Americans don't like our government, its foundational Constitution, its rule of law, its institutions nor its norms. They want change no matter the cost or consequence. When change has come in other countries it has often been greeted later with misgivings after the new order of things has settled in, too often by use of violence and subjugation.

The founders of the United States were well-educated, knowledgeable men who realized they had an opportunity to organize into a nation the underpinnings of a democracy. They knew democracy meant people would choose leaders through free and fair elections, providing for the participation of its citizens in its politics and civic life, protecting the human rights of all citizens, and governing by a rule of law as applied equally to all citizens and the Constitution was designed accordingly and been flexible enough to adjust to "bumps" along the way down to the present day.

Indisputably, the U.S. has had its ups and downs as a nation: the protests of the 1960s, mainly over the war in Vietnam, that led to a proverbial corner-turning by many an American from that decade down to the present time. Dissatisfactions, by a whole lot of Americans, has taken this nation's people from a time when Americans in general—save for the Civil War, civil rights legislation, and intermittent episodes of fear-mongering—accepted their plight and somehow muddled through adversity to arrive now at a split, fractured society where hardly anyone is willing to accept his circumstances. A nation so broken that the Russian Federation under

Vladimir Putin, a man determined to terminate democratic nations and their institutions, is not only influencing U.S. elections but who might also have a firm grip on our president.

What is important to recognize these days is the drift of the nation towards an autocracy with leaders and their supportive followers trying to reshape the government to enable them full control without the rule of law.

Hallmarks of a new order without democracy are characterized by citizens not allowed to choose their leaders or hold them accountable. Protests are forbidden while the citizens lose their sovereignty and political authority. Criticism of the ruling class results in imprisonment and, depending on their severity or threat, death.

It is where the citizens do not know or take part in the formulation of public issues. Voting is the exclusive reserve of the leaders. There's no such entity as a political party and thereby no campaigning by candidates for political office or consideration by the citizenry-at-large in favor or against those persons in charge of all the others. No debating of public issues is allowed any more than attending community meetings, petitioning the government or, most severely prohibited among the unacceptable behaviors, open or even clandestine protests.

No citizen has basic rights such as those in the Bill of Rights. There are no private beliefs and citizens may not write or say what they think. Freedom of religion is abolished while private and public gatherings to worship and practice religion are forbidden. All news is censored and then organized and delivered from one approved

source established by the ensconced leadership. Truth and facts vanish while mendacity and fake news reign uncontested. Citizens cannot freely move about the land and, unless special permission is approved by the authority, citizens must remain located where born while kept under continuous surveillance.

The establishment of laws are not permitted as regime-supporting rules of conduct and behavior are identified and enforced and are constantly tested for obedience from cradle to grave. Any citizen can be arrested, imprisoned and/or executed arbitrarily and without cause, torture and cruel inhumane treatment are willed by the leadership and dependent upon absolute compliance with the rules. The rulers have total authority and judge in rule-breaking and punishment. There is established and maintained a ruling class that enjoys the wealth and riches of the state while those citizens not among the ruling class must accept their plight and express joy and happiness at their servile state.

The citizens of the Weimar Republic of Germany (1919-1933) did not prevent what became Nazi Germany until it was far too late. There are nations in the world today that are getting close to or have arrived at a place very much like or are identical to the descriptions provided here. The People's Republic of China is one of them while others include Cuba, Egypt, Libya, Myanmar, North Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia, The Philippines, Turkey, and a growing list of others, with their strongmen in unlimited terms of office. Only we Americans can defeat ourselves and our way of life; only we can make certain our future as a democracy is secured.

(Gene H. McIntyre lives in Keizer.)

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