

To the class of 2018

By graduation day most of McNary's class of 2018 will have decided what they will do next—work, travel, enter the military or prepare for college. Some of you will toss your mortar boards into the air at the ceremony vowing to be rid of school forever. That's viable, that's a choice. There are no wrong choices when designing your life. And that's what you will do, whether your school days are over forever or whether this summer is just a respite from your next educational step.

Whatever path you choose to follow make it count. Over the past 11 years in this space we have tried to be inspirational for graduates. Several points have popped up every year, because, well, a classic is a classic...

Do no harm. Don't be intolerant or mean to others. Everyone is on their own journey on their own timeline, be patient. Don't get angry unnecessarily—the country already has too

much faux rage about little things. Don't add to it.

No one's perfect. People don't always succeed the first time. Winners keep trying to attain their goals, learning from their mistakes and setbacks. Don't fear failure. It took a lot of failures to finally put man on the moon or to develop smartphones. Keep at it, people admire those who have perseverance, not quitters.

Keep an open mind. About everything—people, places, things; a rigid mind makes for a small person.

Live well and let others live well. Be part of a solution, not part of a problem. Respect others in mind and body, respect your own body. When it comes to your peers, be a mentor.

As a classic book of 60 years said, life is a banquet. So it is, grab yourself a heaping plate of life and dig in.

—LAZ

our
opinion

Water, the Keizer way

Keizer businesses and citizens are due a standing ovation for the way they helped our neighbors to the south amid their contaminated water crisis last week.

A health advisory for Detroit Lake was issued due to toxics from blue-green algae in the water made direct contact unsafe for humans and animals. Salem gets its drinking water from Detroit Lake. Children under the age of 6, the elderly and those with compromised immune systems were advised not to drink the water from their taps. That sent Salem citizens on a furious search for bottled water which, unfortunately bred price gouging by some retail outlets.

Keizer gets all its water from aquifers under the ground and it is accessed with wells throughout the city. It didn't take long for Keizer businesses to start posting on social media

that the water was fine in our city and Salem residents were invited to come and get what they needed. Keizer businessman Nigel Guisinger was instrumental in getting a campaign started through the Keizer Chamber of Commerce to offer water to Salemites. Soon, Facebook was filled with posts from generous Keizer residents and businesses inviting Salem to come and fill up their containers. The initial advisory was lifted early this week, but on Wednesday an advisory was renewed.

It is in America's DNA to help others. We do unto others as we wish they would do unto us. It's no different in Keizer, we jump into action when our neighbors need help.

Kudos to all the residents and businesses who opened their taps.

—LAZ

Shots across the river

Homeowners along the Willamette River have been concerned about stray bullets being fired onto the Keizer side of the river. They are fearful that someone could get hurt, even testifying before the Keizer City Council imploring the city to make it stop.

Those concerns were well-founded. A riverfront home was pierced by a bullet, coming within several feet of an occupant before shattering a backplash in the home's kitchen.

Polk County Sheriff's officers were dispatched and cited four men for reckless endangering and released in lieu of arrest. That is of little solace to those who live on the river. No one should live in constant fear or flinch when they hear a loud noise—that's no way to live.

The quarry in Polk County has been a favored site for gun enthusiasts for years. After a stray bullet inci-

dent in 2017 the owner of the property was alerted and signs were put up on the property to alert shooters about the homes on the other side of the river.

That, obviously, is not enough. No one's property or gun rights trump the rights of others to live peacefully and without fear of bullets smashing into their homes or their bodies.

Mayor Cathy Clark and Police Chief John Teague need to form a united front and communicate with the Polk County Sheriff and all the Polk County Commissioners that a solution must be found. It would be better to solve this government official to government official. We would rather see that happen than this incident open a protracted civil action in the courts.

Keizer leaders need to be sure their citizens are safe, nothing is more important.

—LAZ

#JusticeforShadow

To the Editor:

When my cat went missing on May 23, I learned a resident here at Briarwood Estates traps cats. I started investigating. I put up missing cat flyers. I talked with a lot of neighbors that did not know, like me, till my cat just disappeared.

The onsite manager confirmed he knew of a resident that trapped cats and that he'd given permission to do so. That is disturbing news. The onsite manager said there was a feral/stray cat issue in this park. I disagree; these are people's pets. If you trap any cat, you take it to the Humane Society and get the cat scanned for a microchip. My cat is chipped, spayed and a member of our family.

I spent every day he was missing looking for him. I was desperate for answers. I asked the resident if he traps cats. He said yes he did, along with other animals. He said they are a nuisance and use his good soil as a litter box. I then asked him if he trapped my cat. I told him I want to

know where my cat is and what happened to him. He pointed north and said he released my cat on property north on River Road, near Brooklake Road. My heart sank.

I went there and couldn't find him. The owner of the property and I exchanged numbers promising to call if he sees my cat. What the onsite manager and the resident did is wrong, wrong, wrong. All this information was agonizing to comprehend. My cat walked into his baited trap, which he told me he baited, and he took my pet and just released him in a field some where. This resident lives a block from my house.

My cat was missing for 11 days. The owner of the River Road property called to say he saw my cat. I rushed over there and brought him home. I want to thank my neighbors for letting me know they were looking for my cat, Shadow, and praying for his safe return. I will never forget what this man did to my cat. It's animal abuse.

Lori Beyeler
Keizer

letters



Thumb is on wrong side of scale

By MICHAEL GERSON

America suffers from a persistent misunderstanding of the role of character in public life. For some—a diminishing few—political leaders should be moral exemplars. They should be men and women whom children can look up to and emulate.

Democrats surrendered this standard in their defense of Bill Clinton. Republicans are abandoning this standard in their defense of Donald Trump. There is apparently no remaining constituency for the belief that high office should involve moral leadership.

Given human nature, this expectation was always a recipe for disillusionment. But while it is true that politicians are not called to be pastors, something has been lost in abandoning the ideal of rectitude. Clinton did not just conduct a quiet affair. He exploited an unequal power relationship for sexual favors. He expanded the boundaries of acceptable exploitation. Trump did not just [allegedly] have a fling. He bragged about sexual assault and dismissed it as locker-room talk. He expanded the boundaries of acceptable misogyny.

It is one thing for public officials to fail a moral standard. That makes them human. It is something else to shift a standard in favor of cruelty and abuse. That makes them poor stewards of public trust.

This points to an underestimated role for politics. Politicians may not be moral examples, but they help set the margins of permissible behavior and speech. I'm not talking about the law. We have a Constitution that protects hurtful, even hateful language.

the
opinion
of
others

But public officials help determine the shape of social stigma, which is based on our self-conception as a community.

Stigma has a value determined by context. Social stigma against AIDS or against mental illness damages lives and undermines public health. But the stigmas we feel against misogyny and against racism are tremendous social achievements. Shifting those social expectations in favor of decency was the hard, sometimes dangerous work of generations.

And political leaders—displaying good public character—have helped determine those expectations. It mattered when Theodore Roosevelt invited Booker T. Washington to dinner at the White House. It helped break an oppressive social convention against the social mixing of blacks and whites. It mattered when President Clinton began the tradition of celebrating Eid al-Fitr at the White House. It sent the signal that American public traditions reach beyond Protestantism, Catholicism and Judaism. It also mattered when Trump in 2017 discontinued the White House Eid celebration.

A significant factor in Trump's appeal has been the argument that "political correctness" has gone too far. There are college campuses—yes, you, Evergreen State College—where consciousness has been raised into the stratosphere of silliness and boorishness. But Trump's political use of this idea has had little to do with academic freedom and disruptive student protests. It has had everything to do with testing the limits of prejudiced public language against migrants (particularly Mexicans) as

potential rapists and Muslims (particularly refugees) as potential terrorists.

This is a failure of public character with serious consequences. Trump is urging Americans to drink at a poisoned well of intolerance. This desensitizes some people to the moral seriousness of prejudice. It creates an atmosphere in which bigots gain confidence and traction. And one sad social consequence is the emboldened racism of Roseanne Barr and many like her, many of whom surely believe—on good evidence—that the president of the United States is on their side. The combination of Trumpism, social media and (at least according to Barr) sleeping pills create a powerful disinhibition to hatred.

There are many drawbacks to being ignorant of and indifferent to history. But one of the worst is a failure to appreciate the depth of American racism and the heroism of the long struggle against it. We are a country in which one out of seven people was owned by another. We had an American version of apartheid with-in living memory. It was a hard-won lesson that racism is a form of oppression that destroys the soul of the oppressor as well. We honor that lesson, not out of tender sensibilities, but because of long, difficult experience. Much of what is attacked as political correctness in politics (as opposed to on campus) is really politeness, respect and historical memory.

"I had on my side," said Frederick Douglass, "all the invisible forces of the moral government of the universe." True enough. But it eventually helped to have reinforcement from the U.S. government as well. And it hurts to have a president of poor character placing his thumb on the other side of the moral scale.

(Washington Post Writers Group)

We all have to fight for America

Our nation thankfully recognizes a number of Americans who have contributed greatly to the country's growth and development as bright and shining stars for all others to emulate. Former President John Kennedy's *Profiles in Courage* pays homage to a number of these citizens while American literature and media have added a rather lengthy list of Americans deserving special recognition in addition to JFK's collection.

Meanwhile, we've also had a dark side. Although the Ku Klux Klan was first organized immediately after the Civil War and helped to end Reconstruction in the former Confederacy, it had a re-birth during the 1920s and '30s when it invoked racial hatred toward African-Americans throughout the country and directed its wrath toward Catholic Church members and new immigrants, mainly from China. The KKK has endured but it has been too offensively despicable for mainstream Americans, subsuming it to unacceptable status in modern times.

The so-called Red Scare was another dark episode that commands attention, this time in the 1950s. Then-U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy, a Republican from Wisconsin, rose to fame and power when, in February, 1950, he charged that "hundreds" of "known communists" were in the U.S. State Department. His Red Scare charges convinced millions of Americans that communists had infiltrated all of American life. After McCarthy

attacked the U.S. Army as communist infiltrated he was viewed as a person "without a sense of decency" and sent to history's dust bin.

It is high time once more to take issue with a D.C. resident, President Donald Trump, who, daily, tells lies, presents falsehoods, perpetrates tall-tale whoopers, speaks half-truths along with scary inconsistencies, commits snake-oil salesman exaggerations, espouses conspiracy theories and delusional, self-serving analyses, and, of late, trumpets misbegotten pardons, destructive tariffs and more unfounded mendacities that have been proven untrue and unfounded. By the way, unless our U.S. Constitution with its separation of powers no longer governs this land, Trump cannot pardon himself.

It all adds up to a moment in America where a majority of us who are dedicated to preserve and sustain what we most appreciate and value must protest the mindlessness and apparent self-protections by a president who blatantly embitters and poisons our public culture. Further, Donald Trump's collusion with Russia was concretely established by way of the meeting by his son, Don, Jr, his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, and his former campaign manager, Paul Manafort, when they met with Russian foreign agents to discuss "dirt" against Hillary Clinton and her presidential campaign.

At the same time, it has been whol-

ly disheartening and shockingly disappointing that, among the 535 voting members in the U.S. Congress, so few have come forward to denounce the divisive, antagonistic and reckless language from Trump that the American people find more often offensive and un-American than not. Examples of the few brave souls who've stepped up to defend truths include a Republican senator from Arizona, Jeff Flake, a representative from South Carolina, Trey Gowdy, and even an anchor on Fox News, Shepard Smith, has been courageous enough to stand up.

Our Oregon representatives in the House have been silent save for the one Republican in the state's second district. Otherwise, the others from the remaining districts have been in mute mode for reasons not disclosed. Our senators, Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, have been outspoken at times but, to this writer's knowledge, have never confronted Trump to his face.

The future of our nation as a democracy, with a Constitution and Bill of Rights, our institutions (especially the Department of Justice now), laws, traditions and norms, is at stake by what's happening in our nation's capital. Personally, this writer cannot fathom a future where what's been held in the highest esteem could be lost to a leader with little to no respect for the rule by law. Faith is that the American people will rise in great numbers as they have in the past to oppose authoritarian overreach by what's offensive and unacceptable for the U.S. present and the future.

(Gene H. McIntyre lives in Keizer.)

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