

KeizerOpinion

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Keizer's most spoiled child

There will be many excuses concocted and deployed for the Keizer City Council's actions this week in letting Keizer Little League (KLL) off the hook for more than \$13,000 it owes the complex at Keizer Little League Park. Keizer residents should be skeptical of them.

In May, it became public knowledge that KLL withheld more than \$12,000 it owed the complex from concession sales. On Monday, the public learned that the city manager knew KLL had been withholding the payment for at least the five previous months in hopes of having its contract for managing the park retroactively adjusted to permit keeping those revenues.

Attendees at the city council meeting Monday, July 16, also learned that the concession money wasn't the only money KLL had been withholding from the park complex. KLL owed more than \$15,000 in tournament revenue and slot fees for field usage by KLL teams.

In total, KLL owed the complex more than \$28,000 from the 2017 season. In response, the city council wiped out the amount due from the concession stand in exchange for recouping the slightly higher slot fees and a tepid caution against letting a similar situation arise in the future. One councilor even offered to let them off scot-free. Fortunately, slightly-more-sensible minds prevailed.

In short, KLL blackmailed the complex (that the city owns) for the forgiveness of one debt to pay back another debt to the same entity. City leaders allowed it to happen. This should not sit well with anyone in Keizer.

It would be disingenuous to suggest that Keizer residents got nothing else out of its agreement with the organization; KLL families and board members have gone to great lengths to care for and improve the facilities in recent years. But the organization also had a contract with the city to ensure money generated at the park was reinvested in the park. Whether the group violated that contract through ignorance or oversight is beside the point. Knowing they had a contract with the city of Keizer, and thereby all of its residents, should have prompted every single member of the KLL board of directors to read and make certain

they were following the agreement to the letter.

These actions by KLL and city council are galling, but city councilors doubled down on it by granting KLL's wish to retroactively amend the facility management contract to allow the managing organization to keep half of the concession revenue and all tournament revenue going forward.

At the very least, the council should have kept the contract — as it was originally written — in place until KLL leaders proved that they could be trusted to act in good faith. Instead, the organization will suffer no true consequence for what amounts to a successful blackmail scheme. It's hard to fathom any other situation in the public realm when such tactics would be countenanced. At a time when faith in government is diminished at best, decisions such as this serve to fan the flames of discontent. For Keizer, specifically, it will make residents more skeptical of fees implemented in 2017 to cover the costs of police and public safety.

Moreover, last week, a member of the KLL board told members of the Keizer Parks Advisory Board last week that he plans to request another matching grant from the city to fund more improvements at KLL Park. The editorial board of this paper strongly suggests members of the parks board think long and hard about whether to approve it.

The parks board has approved \$20,000 in matching funds for improvements — that came out of the city's general fund — during the past three years. Adding to that sum will only embolden the bad actors of the KLL board who are trading on nostalgia as much as actual interest in the services they offer. It should not be the role of the volunteer parks board members to dole out repercussions when the city's elected and paid officials fail to do their job, but the Parks Advisory Board is now the only municipal group left with an opportunity to send a message that KLL's actions are not acceptable.

The old adage of sparing the rod and spoiling the child isn't one that this paper's editors are fond of, but the success of KLL's brattish and brutish ways are prompting us to reconsider that stance.

—Editorial Board

our opinion



Legislator's day jobs

I often use this space to bring to you information about the legislature and the process that goes on in that body. What is not spoken of very often in Oregon is what legislators do when we are not in legislative session. Considering we only meet for approximately six months in the odd numbered years and 35 days or so in the even numbered years, we truly are a "part time" legislature with "citizen" legislators.

Many legislators are retired professionals; others are doctors, police officers, teachers and many are attorneys who can return to their practices during the interim period. For those of us who work another job, it's a time to go back to our places of employment. I've met many people in House District 25 that actually didn't know this about our legislature. In my case, I am a lifelong radio/TV broadcaster and I have returned to that in a limited fashion. I do voiceover work, write commercials and other broadcasting related tasks. Still, even though we each go back to our regular jobs, retirement,

law practices, we are legislators.

Though we are part time legislators, most of us treat it as a full time job. Summer is the one time when many legislators take a break and enjoy time with family and friends and try to stay out of the political arena and take a breather. And I think that's a good thing for Oregonians. We do answer phone messages, emails and letters to our offices and for those of us in the House, this interim is devoted to campaigns (the senators are elected to four-year terms, the representatives to two-year terms). As for what I do during the interim, as stated, I do a lot of media related jobs and in their campaigns yet still find time to write potential legislation for the next full session which comes in January 2019.

I meet constituents both in district and in my office at the Capitol. I go on many tours around the state to see what issues are important to Oregon and more specifically, House District 25. I utilize our Legislative Counsel, who are the attorneys who

work for the legislature, by asking them for opinions on various topics. Just recently in Keizer, we had the issue of the shooting range across the river in Polk County that is affecting residents on the Keizer side of the river. I attended a meeting in Polk County as well as wrote letters to the owners of the property, the Polk and Marion County Commissioners and the Polk and Marion County Sheriffs. I used opinions from Legislative Counsel to help me with that. During the interim I also spent time studying the pressing issues of Oregon and in my case, the issues that affect this district the most: agriculture. I intend to again submit legislation to assist and protect our valuable farms and dairies in District 25. I will have more news on those as we move toward January.

All in all, though it's a part time job being a legislator, as you can see the job never ends when the gavel falls. As always, I am honored and privileged to serve you as your State Representative in Keizer, St. Paul and Newberg and thank you for the opportunity.

(Bill Post represents House District 25. He can be reached at 503-986-1425 or via email at rep_billpost@oregonlegislature.gov.)



from the capitol

By BILL POST

Nothing wrong with the middle

There's a need in our country for compromise and mutual consideration by the leaders in Washington, D.C. and throughout the nation, to bring about the changes and set an exemplary example. Such an effort could calm the storms that rage across the nation.

Both Democrats and Republicans in recent years have mutually done much to rile and upset those on the opposite side of the aisle. At the risk of sounding partisan, the first look in this piece is focused on the Republicans as they at present have a slim majority in the U.S. Senate with a somewhat wider margin in the House. The GOP holds sway in the White House and Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, the giant chasm between the wealthy and those with limited means has grown wider and deeper with the near-extinction of the moderating influence of the middle class. The middle class in the last century served as a highly flexible social organ because the poor, through education and opportunity, could move into it while those Americans who greatly succeeded at their endeavors could move into the ranks of Americans with considerable means but not, as now, with excessive wealth.

However, with the middle class diminished and the 1 percent of rich American numbers enhanced, those with the money and power have gone exclusive and sought more money and power by eliminating controls on their spending for like-minded political candidate choices while simultaneously having succeeded to elect their people by denying others of lesser means their vote. Then, too, most recently, by a Supreme Court decision that denied organized labor the

ability to financially compete with them.

It appears likely that reactive conservatives will number 5, pro-active progressives 4. Hence, the Supreme Court of the United States will become demagogic, partisan and one-sided. Every decision by the Supreme Court will be predictable and foreordained, and likely to result in more deep national fractures. Some examples of what's about to happen to cause ever deeper and wider divides can be identified already, that is, women's rights gone, environmental controls abolished, the nation's wealth to the few by taxation law, only Norwegians granted immigration, no more Muslims, and the Affordable Care Act dead.

While only 1 percent of the American population are among the nation's multi-millionaires and billionaires, the remaining 321 million citizens often finding it a struggle to make ends meet, continue nevertheless to support the tiny wealthy minority who have become notorious for their self-centeredness and relentless unwillingness to bring their fellow citizens to even a wage-earning level that provides access to

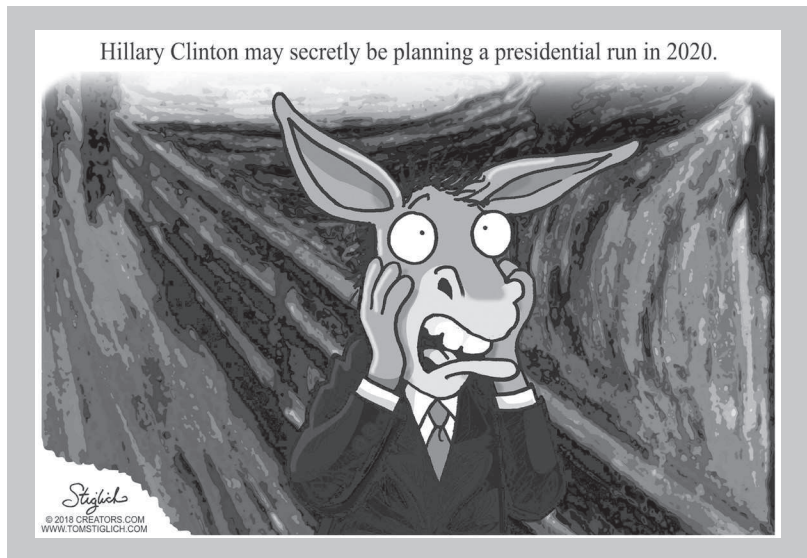
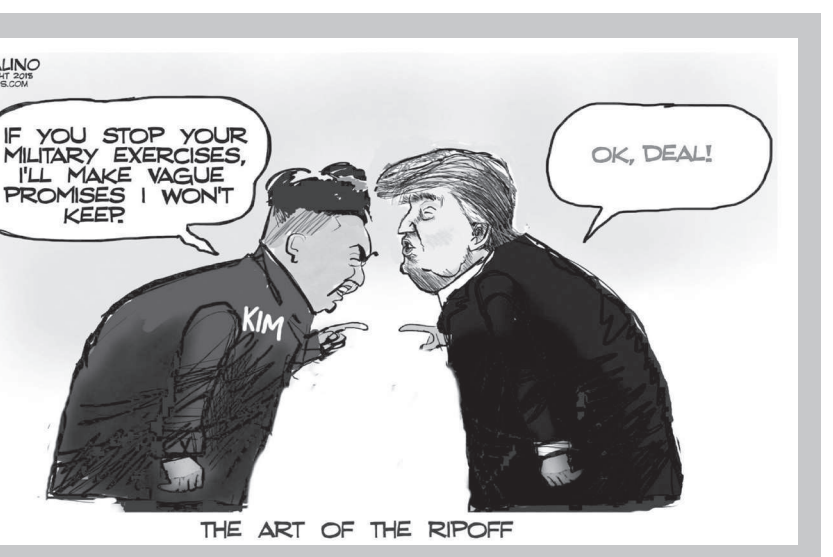
financial security at present and a respectable retirement later.

The logical thing by those who've already been left to pick up crumbs is to see to it by voting and sending their representatives to D.C. and Salem who will work to see to it that more Americans have the opportunity to achieve wages and benefits that begin once again to establish and maintain this democratic republic's anchor and stabilizer, the middle class. When a significant percentage of the population is unwilling to fight for their future and that of their children, then consequent generations will predictably live more like their ancestors in the Middle Ages than the former middle class.

One more thought begs consideration. "Make America Great Again" was the catchy slogan that appealed to a whole lot of voters in the 2016 presidential contest. However, to date, what "America" in that slogan has meant is that the vast majority in millions of Americans who seek the American Dream are no better off; rather, those multi-millionaires before January, 2017, by the new federal tax law, and other Trump administration advantages, have become billionaires.

(Gene H. McIntyre shares his opinion each week in the *Keizertimes*.)

gene h. mcintyre



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