

# Opinion



## Him vs. her

Will that event in Washington, D.C. a few days ago along with its lingering implications rank as the worst in U.S. history? If so, will we ever get over it? Is our demise underway? The answers to these questions by this opinion writer are No! No! and No!

Many events have transpired over the course of the last 230 years that could have led those who came before us to conclude that the U.S. was finished. This list could include the day in 1804

when Vice President Aaron Burr shot Alexander Hamilton, the day during the War of 1812 when the British burned our national capital, the firing on Fort Sumpter in 1861 launching the American Civil War, those days when American presidents were assassinated, the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, and the war in Vietnam.

The point is many things have happened to cause Americans considerable concern over the nation's fate and will probably happen again in one form or another. After all, our U.S. Constitution was written for moments like this. The framers made a good bet that we Americans would be making a mess now and then before getting this and that right and thereby prepared a navigational chart by which to proceed through the ages, the U.S. Constitution.

Whatever the example, we've proven our resilience. We are now in another cultural moment where our people are reckoning with offenses to determine how we can improve our treatment of one another, specifically our female members. We now witness in the Brett Kavanaugh proceedings a battle in tribalism, where a fundamental instinct to believe in something because one's fellow tribal members believe it...over an openness in search of the truth which has proven so far to avoid a firm grip.

The world before our nation was

in vertical mode or top-down, under the thumb of kings, princes and popes. The Declaration of Independence and, later, U.S. Constitution built a horizontal, new order where all humankind are created equal. Of course, there have been the inevitable bumps when many people held tightly to old beliefs and practices, such as when slavery and lack of rights for women held firm.

Passion before reason was on display in D.C. the other day accompanied by one man's word against a women's in a case of sexual assault accuser and accused. Most Americans, it's ventured, have taken sides and remain unmovable while a U.S. Senate confirmation vote is pending. Thereafter, something like half the population will experience vindication; the other half will be disappointed. As for a personal opinion on Kavanaugh, many of his statements regarding Dr. Ford have been proven untrue while his angry outbursts, temper tantrums, emotional immaturity, elitist demands, and close-minded partisanship make his temperament and character unfit to serve as an associate justice on the Supreme Court of the United States.

Opinion also offers that there is no better way to heed the U.S. citizenship each of us owns by our Constitution than by acting on our sovereign right to vote. What that means is that all of us have recourse when we disagree to assert our opinions in support of that we want saved, changed or discontinued. We do so by registering to vote, educating ourselves on ballot measures and candidates, and, in Oregon, completing the ballot sent by mail and returning it to the county clerk ahead of the deadline.

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

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h.  
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## Web Poll Results

Have any of the following affected your support of NFL football?

- Protests - **33%**
- Concussions - **10%**
- Dom. Violence/other off-field - **2%**
- Rule changes - **5%**
- All of the above - **12%**
- I wasn't a fan in the first place - **21%**
- I'm still a die hard fan - **17%**

Vote in a new poll every Thursday!  
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Illustrator and character designer Mike Smith designed all the characters for the game *Paperbound* and has advice for young artists. .

## Keizer's game character designer

By ERIC A. HOWALD  
*Of No Adults Allowed*

Mike Smith, a Keizer resident, is an illustrator and character designer. His project for the past few years has been a video game, *Paperbound*. Mike designed all of the characters from the original game, and it's coming out for the Nintendo Switch soon. Ever since he started working on the game, seeing his characters on a Nintendo system has been something of a dream and he's redesigned all of them and the game's menus to get ready for the Nintendo reveal. No Adults Allowed talked with Mike about how he got his start in art and in video games. This is what he had to say.

**How do you describe your work?**

In my case, I don't work in animation, but I make the characters you get to play in *Paperbound*. It's very entertaining and incredibly challenging.

**When did you start working on your drawing skills?**

I started with stick figures when I was a kid and made a whole universe. I had notebook paper and I could unroll it like a scroll. I would have 60-70 pages and I just kept building. I tried art classes in middle school, but I wasn't good at what they wanted me to do. I wanted to draw the characters I saw in comic books, so I really started working on copying those. In high school, I got to do a comic for the school paper.

**Did you go to school for art or design?**

I tried, but I ran into the same problem I had in middle school. The problem was there wasn't anyone teaching the type of work I wanted to do. All those teachers lived in other places. The cool thing now is there is a computer animation program in the Salem-Keizer School District [at CTEC]. I went there and got to see the types of technology they get to work with and they get to learn from someone who has actually worked in video games. I've also been a mentor to students at Chemeketa Community College. There's also lots of places to learn online.

**Has your job always been as a character designer?**

I worked a lot of jobs when I was younger and then my wife went to work after we had kids. I stayed home and took care of them. The art was kind of a side thing. I wrote it off as a hobby when it should have been a moneymaker.

**How did you get into video games?**

## cool|careers



Around 2013, I found a website where people were putting up their work online and seeing if anybody wanted to hire them. I posted my profile and said I wanted to work on a small thing. I got about two dozen offers. There were people who didn't know what they were doing or the concept wasn't strong enough or just not taking it seriously. I would research them all online to try to figure out their commitment level. Dan Holbert, the creator of *Paperbound*, replied to one of my comments and I went through the same process. There was a YouTube video where he'd taken the game to a local Gamestop, set up a kiosk and let people play it. That was commitment unlike any I'd seen before.

**How did you fit into the game design?**

All the characters in *Paperbound* are based on characters or creatures from books. Dan had kind of set up this world where those characters would fight, but I got to figure out how all of them looked. That was both a blessing and a curse. Sometimes I was running with 50 or 60 ideas from a single book. We started with 10 characters in the original game and I designed two more for a downloadable expansion.

**What was the hardest one to do?**

*Journey to the Center of the Earth* was the hardest. In the book, all the characters were just kind of going to the center of the world and the author would take like five pages to describe a fish. I came up with a rock creature and a turtle guy, but we ended up going with a mastodon that lives in the dome at the center of the earth. He's now one my favorite redesigned characters.

**What was it like seeing other people working on the game bring your characters to life?**

That was amazing because the characters all start as a two-dimensional drawing that goes into my

portfolio. I don't think much about life getting inserted into my sketch. There was a moment in July 2014 when I was stressed out and ready to quit. In the middle of that, the animator sent me a video of Ninjedy running all over one of the levels running and jumping and pulling out a sword. The timing was perfect because the stress flipped and I was energetic again. Seeing the characters come to life, when they come to life, is really rewarding because everyone else on the team adds something a little different to their personality or the way they move.

**What's been the best part of working to launch the game on the Nintendo Switch?**

Well, we thought it would be good to update the look of the menus because we were never really happy with them. They just became part of the final game when we ran out of energy. So, I started redesigning the menus and after I got finished with each part, I would work on redesigning the characters. I didn't even tell Dan until I had redesigned five of the 12, but he got really excited, too, once he saw them.

**What's the hardest part of your job?**

I work with a team, but none of us are in the same place. If you're going to try to do this, you have to be incredibly disciplined and committed. It's tempting to stop and play on the Playstation or watch a movie, and it can also feel very lonely. We found that we worked better when we had a way to communicate quickly so I set up a Facebook group where we could post stuff quick and then get quick feedback from the other people on the team. That helped us all feel more connected and motivated.

**What's your advice for young artists who might want to do what you do?**

Start a sketchbook. If you have a sketchbook and you work at it on a regular basis, you are going to be able to see how you improve. And your teachers are going to be able to see how you've improved. There's also a lot of free software out there that you can get to help you try out different things (See the Cool Tools list).