

# Opinion

## Keizer should join bag ban

The City of Keizer tends to follow the direction of its municipal neighbors. When an issue arises in our city the council invariably asks "What are other cities doing?"

We think the Keizer city council should follow other cities on the issue of plastic shopping bags. Ban them.

First consider the billions upon billions of plastic bags that have been used and disposed of, usually into landfills. Now consider how many plastic bags the average Keizer household uses. Once at home, some of those bags serve double duty as garbage liners. But generally, many are mistakenly put into the recycling bin (they should go into a garbage can because they clog up equipment at recycling centers). There are those who opt for reusable shopping bags.

our opinion

Economically, plastic bags are much cheaper to manufacture than the old-style paper bags. That's why every grocer and most retailers utilize them. Our landfills and our oceans cannot continue to be the dump for billions of bags around the world.

Some reasons people might cite for not banning plastic bags include: personal freedom, too much governmental interference, let the market decide the issue, too costly for the public and retailers going without.

Society cannot continue to kick solvable problems down the road for the next generation to address. When humanity has the chance to do what is right for the environment we should not hesitate to act today.

Keizer should join Salem, Portland and Corvallis in banning

plastic shopping bags. Consumers would have to purchase reusable shopping bags and remember to take them to the store. A ban of plastic shopping bags is not an ideological or economic issue, it is a conservative issue, period. Everyone is a steward of the globe we inhabit and thus we need to do what is necessary to care for our fragile environment.

Our municipal neighbors have led the brave campaign to rid their cities of plastic bags—Keizer follows its neighbors, let's follow them on this issue.

Debating this issue should commence, but in the end wouldn't everyone like to say they helped make their home a little neater and a little healthier?

It's time now for the city staff and the city council to do their part.

—LAZ

## Make them sober holidays

Everyone makes mistakes. Getting behind the wheel of a vehicle after drinking is not a mistake, it is the willful disregard for the law and for social norms.

During the holiday season, incidents of drunk driving spike. People find themselves at office parties or other celebrations, drink too much and decide they are fine to get home. Many times they are not fine and if stopped would find their blood alcohol level past the legal limit.

All law enforcement organizations will be on high alert for im-

paired driving this holiday season, as they should be. We, and hopefully everyone, has a very low tolerance for those who drink and then drive. The message has been sent millions of times over the decades on the dangers of driving after drinking—the costs of getting stopped and arrested, not only in fines, but also increased insurance rates. Employers do not look kindly on their employees who miss work due to a DUII.

We don't accept the excuse of "I made a mistake." We all know what alcohol and other stimulents do.

We don't accept the excuse of "I had a drink while on medication." If one is on medication one should not drink—no holiday celebration is worth tossing one's dignity out the window.

There are rules about drinking that are easy to follow: assign a designated driver, don't drink to excess, and do not drive after drinking.

Drinking and driving is not a mistake—it is a crime that should be punished to the full extent of the law, first offense or not.

—LAZ

## From your table to their farm

By DEBRA J. SAUNDERS

Forget all the tongue clucking about Washington being so divided and nasty that Democrats and Republicans cannot work together. As the Senate and House proved this week in passing the \$867 billion farm bill, when it comes to spending money they don't have, party leaders really can reach across the aisle.

With the national federal debt approaching \$22 trillion, President Donald Trump has praised the bill, which provides food stamps for the poor, but also hands out subsidies to American farmers, even though it does not include needed reforms or even modest spending cuts.

Conservative think tanks dismiss the farm subsidies as corporate welfare. On the left, environmentalist groups have opposed them as well. Fiscal hawks are appalled at the failure of Congress to do anything to ease the deficit.

And yet the farm bill lives. Chris Edwards of the libertari-

an-leaning Cato Institute has written that federal farm subsidies "redistribute wealth upward," with the bulk of the money going "to the largest and wealthiest farm households."

Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, the rare farmer in the Senate, was among the rump of Republicans to vote against the bill. Grassley explained that he could not support a measure that would not limit subsidies to the wealthiest farms—which he says puts young and beginning farmers at a disadvantage.

"I know it's hard to believe, but I've never heard a single young or beginning farmer tell me that the way to help them is to give more money to the largest farmers," Grassley offered in a statement.

Grassley also voiced horror at provisions to expand the definition of farm families to include cousins, nieces and nephews, even if they don't work on a farm. The bill, he charged, seems "intentionally written to help the largest farmers receive unlimited subsidies from the federal govern-

ment."

Grassley wanted farm subsidy reform. House Republicans, on the other hand, held up the farm bill in a push to mandate work requirements for some Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program recipients. To Edwards it seems wrong that the GOP House demanded work requirements for the poor, but not "wealthy farmers or landowners."

Then once House Republicans gave up on that issue, Democrats apparently were hungry to pass a bill that would deliver on SNAP.

Be it noted that farm subsidies account for some 20 percent of the farm bill's spending, while 80 percent goes to SNAP, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

The Environmental Working Group's Scott Faber has been a longtime critic of farm subsidies. On Wednesday, however, Faber praised the measure's drinking water reforms and provisions to promote organic farming.

The next day he released a statement that lit into the farm subsidies for "millionaires and city slickers."

Marc Goldwein of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget told the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* that there is a lot to like in the 2018 farm bill and farm bills in general.

Nonetheless, it is hard for Goldwein to fathom why the GOP-controlled Congress failed to find at least \$1 billion annually in savings in a measure that has been a perennial target of the right. Federal discretionary spending has spiked by 16 percent over the last two years—and the farm bill offers "low-hanging fruit" ripe for fiscal discipline.

But in the two years of GOP control over the White House, Senate and House, there has been no zeal to budget responsibly. House Republicans offered a bill with work requirements, but no savings, said Goldwein. Senate Republicans offered a bill with no work requirements and no savings. And Trump has signaled his readiness to sign a bill with no savings.

Edwards sees "classic logrolling" at work. The marriage of food stamps and farm subsidies created common cause for urban Democrats and rural Republicans. Now funds for organic farming and support for industrial hemp mean lawmakers feel no need to economize.

The worst part, to my mind, is this: House Republicans always were going to cave on the work requirements, but they might have been able to hold out for savings. Goldwein figured cutting \$25 billion to \$50 billion would not be a heavy lift. But these Republicans cannot be bothered because they no longer care about the deficit. (Creators Syndicate)



## Naughty, Nice, or Norse?

By LAUREN MURPHY  
*Keizertimes intern*

Santa's Naughty or Nice list has been a tool for parents for years. Every Christmas some relative will ask, "Have you been nice this year?" and deep inside, no matter what our age is, we really want to say yes; but, where did that list come from anyway?

Nordic religion has changed a lot over the years, but it was widely practiced in what is now known as northern Germany or Denmark for several hundred years. The religion had many different aspects to it. There were multiple gods, mythical beings and wars between different tribes.

Before Christmas was celebrated in Europe, the Germanic people celebrated a holiday called "yule." They would wear furs and a beard and go to people's houses pretending to be "Old Man Winter" or more commonly known as Odin. They believed in Odin was king of the Æsir tribe. He was the god of several things including, wisdom, healing, royalty

and death. He was rumored to have magical powers and fly through the air on a grey eight-legged horse and, sometimes, he wore a red cloak.

That sounds like Santa, but where did his list come from? Other people believed that Wodan (a variation of Odin) flew through the air on a white horse and was accompanied by two black ravens. The ravens names were Huginn and Muninn and they would listen to people through their chimneys and report their good and bad behavior.

After Yule, the Norse goddess Freya would spend 12 days going around to the people in the land. She gave gifts to the good and misery to the corrupt. She traveled in a chariot pulled by horses.

So, in 280 A.D., when Santa started to do his thing, he looked to the other legends who came before him. Combining aspects of the horse-drawn transportation, giving gifts, visiting homes, and of course the naughty and nice list.



A portrait of Odin - titled *Odin the Wanderer* - by Georg von Rosen from 1886.

What do you get when you make a vampire snowman?

Frostbite

### crossword

#### Twosomes

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13			14	15					16		
17				18					19		
		20		21				22			
23	24	25		26	27	28					
29			30		31				32	33	
34			35	36			37				
38			39	40		41		42			
43				44	45	46	47				
48				49			50	51			
		52			53			54			
55	56			57	58	59					
60			61		62			63	64	65	
66			67				68				
69			70					71			

CREATORS NEWS SERVICE

By Charles Preston

#### ACROSS

- 1 Spill the beans
- 5 Pamphlet
- 10 Baseball stat.
- 13 Norse gods
- 15 Musical variety show
- 16 Rowing essential
- 17 Movie critics
- 19 Cell constituent
- 20 Finial
- 21 Metric unit
- 22 Benedict
- 23 Soil mates?
- 27 Holy: Fr.
- 29 Ripen
- 30 Comedy duo
- 34 Spanish priest
- 36 Sign of a hit
- 37 Tenant
- 38 Dance
- 40 Psychic ability, briefly
- 42 Former American actress
- 43 Surface thawing
- 45 Cheers bartender
- 47 Small missile
- 48 19th C. lithographers
- 51 Creek
- 52 Rope
- 53 Extensive properties

#### DOWN

- 1 College degs.
- 2 Garland
- 3 Balaam's mount
- 4 Actor-folksinger
- 5 Italian three
- 6 Country singer
- 7 Unwilling
- 8 Panacea
- 9 Vietnamese holiday
- 10 Prolific musical collaborators
- 11 Loud noise
- 12 Savings accts.
- 14 Drive back
- 18 Italian currency

- 22 Expunged
- 23 Stratagem
- 24 Brazilian river
- 25 Two-time Drama Critics' Award Winners
- 26 Certain
- 28 1987 Oscar winner
- 31 Italian physicist
- 32 Term of affection
- 33 Busybodies
- 35 Greek marketplaces
- 39 French affirmatives
- 41 Lay a foundation
- 44 Possessing a will
- 46 Former Washington socialite
- 49 He adds the crowning touch
- 50 Rage
- 54 Floral perfume
- 55 Name in Louisiana politics
- 56 Indonesian islands
- 58 King in Norse mythology
- 61 Cooking abbreviation
- 62 Linden or Holbrook
- 63 Trevino's concern
- 64 Finale
- 65 Aye

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## Web Poll Results

### Is Die Hard (1988) a Christmas movie?

Yes: **59%**

No: **41%**

Vote in a new poll every Thursday!  
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