

Opinion

Turning the page

By **LYNDON ZAITZ**

For all intents and purposes 2018 is finished. All that is left to do is to declare our resolutions and ring in the new year.

Some would say that 2018 was a less than stellar year, both nationally and internationally. But 2018 was a great year for those who married, became parents, graduated from school, received a huge promotion and raise or moved into a new house.

There is nothing so promising as a new year. A clean slate awaits us to write our plans, dreams and wishes upon. The gloom of winter really can't compare to the optimism we can bring with each new day. Though some animals hibernate during winter, we humans can't stay in a warm, cozy bed for two or three months. Whether we like it or not, life comes at us every morning. Obligations, duties and responsibilities await us. Many animals hibernate in winter, but we humans cannot stay in a warm, cozy bed for two or three months and wait for warm spring days.

I have found changing one's nest is a very good cure-all for winter blues. When I need a change, a rearranging of furniture and a purging of storage goes a long way to give me a new perspective.

When we find ourselves in a day

to day routine that seems more arduous because of the gray, cold winter weather, a change will do the psyche good. It's too wet and cold to do any major gardening this time of year. Look inward. Make changes just for sake of change—rearrange the photos on your walls, switch the sofa around, move the television to a different room. The best thing? You don't

need anyone's permission to do that. If your home, however, is practically perfect in every way, there may be other changes during winter. For those with the means to get a taste of the tropics during winter, good for you. For those without the means, there are volunteer opportunities abounding in the community.

Barring a change of scene, the winter months are prime time for improvement. Simple chores such as washing all the interior windows will pay off when spring's first rays of sun start streaming through. Or, go into the den and update your resume, go through files and discard what is not needed.

Spring is a new of renewal but getting the process started early in mid-winter is very cathartic. And you'll face 2019 with courage and optimism. After all, the future belongs to those who plan for it.

(Lyndon Zaitz is publisher of the Keizertimes)

on
my
mind

guest
column

'Drained' federal agencies are swampier than ever

Throughout his campaign for president, Donald J. Trump promised time and again that he would drain the "swamp." The swamp Trump referenced was the imagined one in Washington, D.C., where all the old freeloaders and deadbeats lived off the public purse but produced nothing but large guts and bad ideas.

Trump said he'd do something about the malingerers by appointing really good people to his administration's cabinet posts and other senior positions. So, they were one by one given the top jobs in the White House but soon enough were recognized as not only among the poor examples they replaced from previous administrations but were found to be even worse than their predecessors from as far back as any living Americans could

remember.

Two of the worst violators and among those early-on to be pointed to the nearest exit were Health and Human Service Secretary Tom Price and Environmental Protection Agency Chief Scott Pruitt. Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has remained in his job but will soon follow his former associates. Zinke, a former Montana congressman, has borne a remarkable resemblance to Pruitt in his approach to established policy standards: fit for them to break.

Zinke has become notorious in a mere two years at accumulating about a dozen inquiries into his manipulation of public resources for private use. By dismantling rules that have protected the nation's wilderness and wildlife, he had led the

way for others who seek to rape by his guidance and encouragement all that environmentalists and naturalists have worked for the past 100 years to establish and protect.

According to the Center for Western Priorities, there have been many investigations by the Interior Department's inspector general and other environmental groups. Several of Zinke's GOP predecessors, who sought to privatize through personal business interests the country's many wildlife refuges, parks, monuments, and public lands, never came anywhere near the list of Zinke's achieved turnovers.

Recently, the inspector general opened another investigation into Zinke's role in a Montana land deal involving the chairman of Halliburton. The oil services company also stands to benefit from such policies as what have been Zinke's apparent disregard for state interests in preservation through his efforts to expand offshore drilling, including Oregon's border to the Pacific Ocean.

investigation? So far, the investigation has resulted in the convictions of several Trump associates. Not one of the convictions, however, has had anything to do with a Trump-Russian "collusion."

If the definition of a successful special counsel or special prosecutor is the number of convictions he or she obtains, then the Whitewater investigation into an allegedly crooked Arkansas real-estate deal and a crooked Little Rock bank was an unmitigated success. True, that probe's big targets, Bill and Hillary Clinton, were not charged, but the investigation resulted in 14 convictions, including the then-governor of Arkansas.

Webster Hubbell, Hillary Clinton's former law partner at Little Rock's Rose Law Firm, was convicted. Hubbell, at the beginning of the probe, held the No. 3 position in the Justice Department. He admitted to stealing from clients and partners of his law firm and pled guilty to mail fraud and tax evasion. He was sentenced to 21 months in prison. He was later indicted on an additional 18 charges after resigning from the DOJ. *The New York Times* reported: "Some money Hubbell received in 1994, for which the prosecutor said he did 'little or no work,' might have been given to

discourage him from being more candid with investigators. ... Much of the income Hubbell received in 1994 came from contracts arranged by close friends and supporters of the Clintons, suggesting to investigators that Hubbell may have been given money to discourage him from cooperating with the Whitewater independent counsel's office."

James McDougal, Clinton friend and Whitewater business partner, operated Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan, the bank under investigation. Madison failed in 1989, costing taxpayers \$60 million. McDougal was convicted of 18 felony counts related to bad loans made by his bank. After his conviction, McDougal agreed to cooperate with the special prosecutor.

Susan McDougal, James McDougal's former wife, was a partner in the Whitewater land deal and in Madison Guaranty. She was convicted of four felony fraud counts, but refused to cooperate with the Whitewater prosecutors. McDougal was sentenced to 18 months in jail on a civil contempt charge, but still has refused to answer questions before a grand jury. She was later charged with criminal contempt and obstruction of justice. President Clinton gave her a full pardon in the final hours of his presidency.

Hillary Clinton called her husband a victim of a "vast right-wing conspiracy." Bill Clinton adviser Paul Begala called independent counsel Ken Starr "corrupt" and his investigation a "witch hunt" and "a scuzzy investigation" based on "leaks and lies and manufactured evidence." Clinton senior strategist Rahm Emanuel complained of the "partisan pursuit of the president." The difference is that the Whitewater convictions, as opposed to the Mueller probe convictions at this point, specifically related to the purpose of the probe.

Clearly, some Trump associates broke laws, and real-estate developer Trump perhaps made misleading statements about a proposed deal for a real-estate project in Russia. But since virtually every political pundit predicted Trump's landslide defeat in 2016, why the surprise that Trump was simultaneously working on his next act? As for the accusation that Trump directed Cohen to make payments to prevent his relationships with Daniels and McDougal from coming to light during the campaign, what happened to the Bill Clinton defense—"Everybody lies about sex"? Trump critics simultaneously called him an idiot and the conductor of a scheme intended to break campaign finance laws by using his own money to pay off mistresses.

The Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel, in 2000, wrote, "The indictment or criminal prosecution of a sitting President would unconstitutionally undermine the capacity of the executive branch to perform its constitutionally assigned functions." The recourse is impeachment and then removal from office, following a trial in the Senate. Unless the Mueller report contains a lot more than what we know, so far, neither is likely.

(Creators Syndicate)

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Web Poll Results

What do you think was the biggest Keizer news story of the year?

In-N-Out burger restaurant plans Keizer store: **34%**

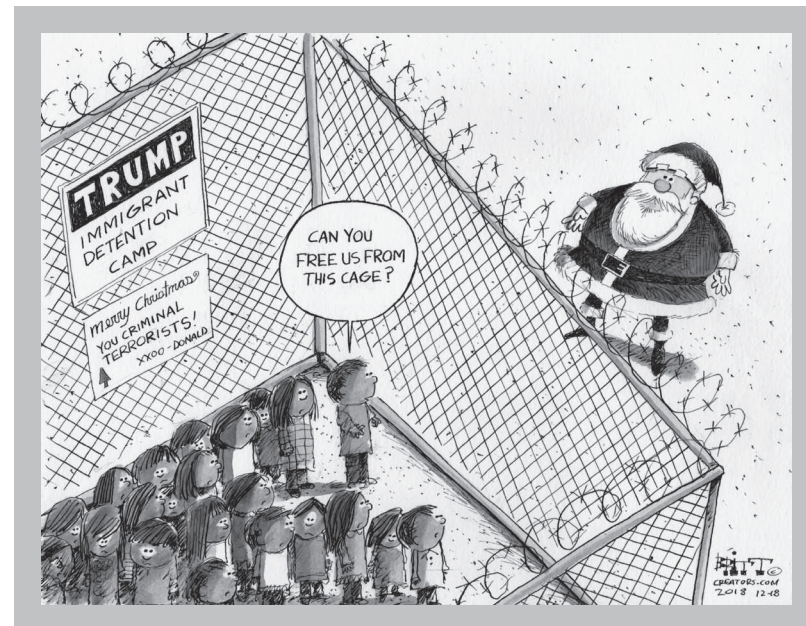
Walmart by WinCo Foods opens in Keizer: **21%**

West Salem shooting range/bullets hit Keizer home: **10%**

School district invokes eminent domain on church property: **9%**

Six other stories: **26%**

Vote in a new poll every Thursday!
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2019 Legislature convenes in 3 weeks

Well Happy New Year! I hope your holidays have been full of peace and harmony. I'm taking the time to enjoy the season and embrace a little quiet before the new year comes. The 2019 legislative session starts on January 14. This is the earliest the legislature has ever begun as the new constitutional end of session date is June 30. This is a nice and welcome change so that members can enjoy Independence Day with their families.

Even with being in the super-minority, I'm looking forward to serving in the 80th legislature as I just found out I will be serving on the House Committee on Judiciary and the House Committee on Agriculture and Land Use as vice chair. All committee assignments are made by Speaker of the House Tina Kotek. The Committee on Agriculture and Land Use is a new committee formed by the Speaker. I'm excit-

ed to serve on this committee so that I can better advocate for my agriculture friends. Seven members have been assigned to this committee, four Democrats and three Republicans. It really should be a fun group and I trust we will do good work for rural communities. As you know, House District 25 (Keizer to St. Paul to Newberg) is very much a heavy agricultural district with farms between and around each of those communities. From my first term to now I have always promised to look out for and defend our farmers as they are un-

der more and more pressures that can significantly change their livelihoods and eventually change how we as citizens live and thrive in Oregon. I am very much anticipating much good will be done via this committee for the farmers, ranchers and dairies in our district.

This will be my third term serv-

ing on the House Committee on Judiciary. This is one of the toughest committees to sit on as the majority of the bills goes through this committee and issues are very complex. I thoroughly enjoy being on this committee as I ask the simple questions in the room that no one else wants to ask, but everyone is thinking. Basically, I make sure everyone who is watching knows what is actually being discussed. Eleven members have been assigned to this committee, seven democrats and four republicans. It should be an interesting session, as many controversial topics are expected to come to the Judiciary Committee. I hope to be your voice on that committee, expressing the values that House District 25 believes in and the reason why you elected me to represent you.

As always, please feel free to stop by my office during session any time. I love welcoming constituents to the Capitol. Have a great rest of your holiday season!

(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

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