

Opinion

Build vertically, not horizontally

It can be assumed that an overwhelming majority of Keizer residents don't think about the growth of the city and where it should go. That's as it should be. Citizens elect city councilors who hire the city manager and approve his choice for heads of the various city departments (known as city staff). The city council sets policy for the city and the city staff implements those policies.

The Community Development Department is overseeing discussions about Keizer's future growth. The Housing Needs Analysis/Building Lands Inventory (HNA/BLI) Advisory Committee is the latest iteration of various bodies appointed by the city to discuss the way forward for expected growth over the next two decades. All these groups have been funded by grants from the state.

With the state, the city and various bodies talking about where Keizer will put its expected 10,000 new residents, there is not much reason for current residents to think too

much about the issue. However, few issues have greater potential to divide the city. Some people don't want to grow, some people want to expand the city limits, some people want to grow vertically.

Members of the public should understand that they, as citizens, can attend any subsequent meeting of any task force that is devising a recommendation for the city councilor to consider. Especially sensitive to these meetings should be those whose livelihoods or lifestyle could be affected by development.

There is much talk about splitting the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) Keizer shares with Salem. As a single UGB there is enough land inventory to satisfy land use mandates set by the state of Oregon. The problem is that Keizer has basically run out of room to grow. The state of Oregon says that Keizer must prepare for those additional 10,000 people; the city must also consider what kind of housing will be needed, from single family homes to multi-family residences (apartments) to manufactured

homes.

Initial data shows that if the urban growth boundary is expanded north and Keizer annexes that land into city limits, the prices of houses built there would mostly be out of reach of current Salem-Keizer homeowners.

Keizer will continue to be a desired address due to our low tax rate and our schools. Unless the city wants to get into the developing business and become a land lord business, it will have to see to it that the table is set for the types of development that can meet the expected demand.

The city should look into zoning changes that will allow tall, mixed used buildings along River Road. Affordable housing units need to be part of any new development; it's the city's duty to assure that everyone can find a place to live in Keizer.

Being creative with development swaps and land swap, government can work with the private to build a Keizer for the future that benefits all concerned.

(LAZ)

Sex harassment at the Oregon capitol

The Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) investigations at the state capitol have found that sexual harassment in the form of inappropriate touching, suggestive language and power plays over subordinates are commonplace. However, those legislators identified as responsible for what's been determined as wrongdoing, say the complaints against them are not true.

It has been the case among members of Congress, the entertainment industry, corporate executives, and others, that once discloser of this kind of behavior is made public the result has been stop actions, including immediate dismissal, forced resignation, heavy fine and, in a couple of cases, impending prison time. However, the case in Oregon has so far been a study in contrasts while the newly-elected BOLI commissioner, Val Hoyle, has recused herself due to what she argues is her predecessor's "unusual role in the case" and turned the matter over to her second in com-

mand.

The upshot to where things stand now is that, at the request of the Capitol's lawmakers, there will be no consequences for those found guilty. Instead, there will be mediation. That means things will remain as they have been in that workplace, an unchanged condition likely undesirable to those women who work in the Capitol and want action now.

Further, mediation entails a lot of talk in search of ways to address behavior improvements and, once agreed to, go into effect on a kind of honor system where individuals promise self-correction with nothing more done as long as everyone there walks the talk.

It is imagined that this way of going about correcting behaviors places more pressure on the victims than the accused. Under mediation the power remains with the accused who can bring down a whole lot of punishment on those who would be so bold as to report harassments again. As a person who spent some of his work-

ing years in state employment, anyone who complained to higher ups about the unacceptable conduct of managers received intolerable treatment in return, to the extent that they were often forced to resign while perpetrators, somewhat more encouraged, survived.

What has been going on by way of sexual harassment at the state Capitol has been going on for decades there and is, one might speculate, in the DNA of the place as it resides widespread in our society at large. Mediation steps will be taken because that's what the current authority (perhaps involving the usual political suspects) has committed to allow. But don't expect the inappropriate behavior to disappear overnight. As history from elsewhere has shown under similar circumstances, it predictably will not just go away through promises of self-discipline and just may, possibly, wait until those responsible have left the premises due to retirements or are replaced by way of the ballot box.

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

Dear mom and dad: cool it

By **KARISSA NIEHOFF** and **PETER WEBER**

If you are the mother or father of a high school athlete in Oregon, this message is primarily for you.

When you attend an athletic event that involves your son or daughter, cheer to your heart's content, enjoy the camaraderie that high school sports offer and have fun. But when it comes to verbally criticizing game officials or coaches, cool it.

Make no mistake about it. Your passion is admired, and your support of the hometown team is needed. But so is your self-control. Yelling, screaming and berating the officials humiliates your child, annoys those sitting around you, embarrasses your child's school and is the primary reason Oregon has

an alarming shortage of high school officials.

It's true. According to a recent survey by the National Association of Sports Officials, more than 75 percent of all high school officials say "adult behavior" is the primary reason they quit. And 80 percent of all young officials hang up their stripes after just two years of whistle blowing. Why? They don't need your abuse.

Plus, there's a ripple effect. There are more officials over 60 than under 30 in many areas. And as older, experienced officials retire, there aren't enough younger ones to replace them. If there are no officials, there are no games. The shortage of licensed high school officials is severe enough in some areas that athletic events are being postponed or

cancelled—especially at the freshman and junior varsity levels.

Research confirms that participation in high school sports and activities instills a sense of pride in school and community, teaches lifelong lessons like the value of teamwork and self-discipline and facilitates the physical and emotional development of those who participate. So, if the games go away because there aren't enough men and women to officiate them, the loss will be infinitely greater than just an "L" on the scoreboard. It will be putting a dent in your community's future.

If you would like to be a part of the solution to the shortage of high school officials, you can sign up to become a licensed official at HighSchoolOfficials.com. Otherwise, adult role models at high school athletic events here in Oregon are always welcome.

(Kariissa Niehoff is executive director of the National Federation of State High School Associations; Peter Weber is executive director of the Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA).)

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Web Poll Results

Should Division-1 college football move from a 4-team to an 8-team playoff to determine a champion?

Yes: 75% No: 25%

Vote in a new poll every Thursday!
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Kudos to cleaners
To the Editor:

A great big thank you is in order for the volunteers of the Keizer Cultural Center. Last Saturday, volunteers from the (Keizer Community Library, Homegrown Theatre, Keizer Art Association and the Keizer Heritage Museum) rolled up their sleeves, grabbed cleaning supplies and worked together to make short work of sprucing up Keizer's old school house. The cleaning was a prelude to touch-up painting of the interior and the volunteers made short work of the project. The Keizer Cultural Center organizations are totally operated by volunteers, with no paid staff, and it is gratifying to see them pitch in to help preserve this special historical building.

Gayle McMurria Bachik Keizer

(The writer is the chair of the Oversight Committee.)

letters



File
TOP: McGee wife family and friends at the dedication of a bench in honor of his late wife, Shirley. ABOVE LEFT: McGee delivers a speech during a First Citizen Banquet. ABOVE RIGHT: McGee with longtime friend David Johnson on a cruise.

MCGEE, continued from Page A1

1980s, but, by then, McGee was a regular presence at meetings of the then-new Keizer City Council. McGee was already a past president of the Rotary Club of Keizer, but he was about to step into a much larger arena of community involvement.

"Jerry steadfastly stood up for his vision for the city and always felt free to share it with the council," said former city councilor Chet Patterson.

Former councilor Phil Bay said there were some evenings when McGee asked him to pick up Shirley so she could be there in his stead.

"He didn't want to miss anything," Bay said.

He developed a reputation as a budget hawk during the meetings simply through attendance, but soon his needling pushed sitting officials to the brink. Then-Mayor Bob Newton and Bay told him it was time to put up or shut up.

"One day, I said he should get involved. And he said, 'By golly, I think I will,'" Bay said.

McGee was elected to the Keizer City Council in 1991 and served until 2003, he is the longest-serving city councilor to date.

Despite his reputation as a staunch conservative and, at times, exhausting penny counter, the thing most fellow councilors recalled was McGee's capacity for grace.

Patterson, who had left the council for a time, returned during McGee's stint.

"There again I saw his devotion to Keizer and all things Keizer. While we were not always on the same page on any given issue, Jerry was always very gracious in accepting the vote of the council and then moving on," Patterson said.

McGee's time on the council included the most epic council meeting to date, a barn-burner that extended to the wee hours of the morning as the council debated on whether to bring a baseball team to town.

For the baseball fan in McGee, it must have been a wrenching moment, but he never failed to surprise when he ended up on the losing end of a battle.

"Jerry opposed the stadium project but was never too proud to admit that the Stadium was very good for Keizer and he was glad he lost that argument," said Volcanoes' owner Jerry Walker. At his retirement from the council, Walker and his wife, Lisa, presented McGee with an official team jacket.

Former councilor Richard Walsh said McGee taught him the difference between a politician and a statesman, adding that McGee was the epitome of the latter.

"Jerry taught me that a statesman uses his political power and resources to effectuate positive policies while maintaining relationships. Politicians are concerned with how a policy will affect themselves while a statesman only worries about how the policy will affect others. Jerry was a statesman in all these respects and more," Walsh said.

Walsh also got to know McGee as an educator.

"He took the Boy Scouts from Troop 121 on a trip to his gold mine and taught us all how to prospect for gold," Walsh said. When

McGee departed the council he gave the sitting councilors a rock from his mine with grains of gold in it "a reminder to always look at the bright spots in every situation and to see value in things that appeared worthless," Walsh said.

His lengthy time on the council, also gave him the opportunity to mentor one of the city's upcoming mayors, Lore Christopher. Christopher's name was drawn from a bucket when the sitting councilors deadlocked 3-3 to fill a vacant seat. McGee supported Christopher's opponent, and Christopher wasn't certain what kind of working relationship would come of the circumstances.

"The person I feared the most was Councilor McGee, and I even stated that I thought I would never be able to work with him. Councilor McGee turned out to be my closest confidant and mentor," Christopher said. "This was his nature. Councilor McGee valued every relationship and he worked to maintain and nurture close relationships. For years, I watched Councilor McGee thoughtfully listen and respectfully debate many individuals that he was on the opposite side of an issue with, yet all of those individuals felt supported and listened to."

During his time as a councilor, McGee sowed the seeds of his next act, Keizer's unofficial historian. He helped establish the Keizer Points of Interest Committee which has been marking historical sites through the city for almost two decades. Passion projects for McGee included marking the spot where the 45th Parallel



Submitted
McGee rides in on horseback to a dedication of the Thomas Dove Keizer statue in front of the Keizer Civic Center.

crosses River Road North, a spot at the corner of River Road and Chemawa Road that represents the donation land claim of Thomas Dove Keizer, and a statue of Keizer himself outside the Keizer Civic Center. McGee was a regular visitor to Keizer classrooms where he dressed in character as Keizer to deliver enthralling history lessons, and he wrote about the Keizer family's wagon train trip to the Willamette Valley in a historical novel titled *It's a Long Way to Oregon*.

On news of McGee's death and Walsh's recollection about the gold-veined rocks, Christopher said she found herself reaching for the rock McGee gifted to her and found it alongside inscribed copies of his numerous self-published books.

"I love reading his books because I knew him so well that I can hear his voice as I read his words. It is a comfort now that we will always have him speaking to us through his books," Christopher said.

McGee was preceded in death by his wife, Shirley, sons Shawn and Shannon McGee, and sister Shirley Olson.

He is survived by daughters Marty McGee, Tammy McGee, Cathy Jordan and Wendy Hunt; grandchildren Wes Jordan, Brianna Hunt and Ian Hunt; and longtime friend Diane Monroe.