

# Opinion

## Bball hoops need more discussion

By JONATHAN THOMPSON

On a sunny summer afternoon streets all over Keizer are alive with kids on their bikes and playing basketball. Those basketball hoops are now, for the most part, banned in our neighborhoods. I challenge us as a community to do better for our kids.

The *Keizertimes* deserves a big “thank you” for covering this issue. They have shown us why local, community focused journalism is so important. I do want to take issue with one part of a recent editorial entitled *Sidewalks are for all* where the author describes this issue as an example of how democracy should work. He says a complaint is made and legislation is enacted to fix it. The problem with the basketball hoop issue is that those making the complaint did not show up at the Keizer City Council meeting to make their case. As the paper notes, only one person spoke at the meeting and he was against the ordinance. How important could the complaint have been?

This issue requires a much larger community discussion than we have had. We want kids to turn off the TV

and get some exercise but we are making it harder and harder to do so. In our case, the closest park to our home is on the other side of a busy street and does not have a basketball hoop. The closest school is across two busy streets and the hoops are tucked back behind where we won't let our daughter go without close supervision.

We have roads that allow cars, bikes, pedestrians and mass transit. On some roads in Keizer we have a major bikeway which attracts riders from all over the world. Cars and bikes coexist there.

Surely we can all come together and find a way to accommodate both pedestrians and basketball hoops on the sidewalk.

I challenge us as a community to do better. Let's show other cities the “Keizer Way.” As the editorial's headline states “sidewalks are for all.” Let's make that headline true by finding a way for our kids to have hoops while leaving space for people to walk.

(Jonathan Thompson lives in Keizer with his wife and 10 year old daughter who likes to play basketball.)

guest  
opinion

## Downward spirals of depression can be deadly

By MICHAEL GERSON

There are alarming consequences for the survival of human beings and the success of the society they inhabit when the brain suffers without treatment. And it has become frighteningly common for Americans to find their way into despair and self-murder.

More than 7% of American adults had at least one major depressive episode in 2017. Nearly 13% of the U.S. population likely took antidepressant medication during the past month, yet suicide rates have risen to the highest since World War II. The odds of dying from suicide or an opioid overdose -- the “diseases of despair” -- are now higher than that of dying from a motor vehicle accident.

These problems are tragically concentrated among the young. More than three million people aged 12-17 had at least one major depressive episode in 2017 -- most accompanied by some form of severe impairment. The highest prevalence of major depressive disorder is among people aged 18-25. Some claim these numbers have risen mainly due to increased reporting. But that can't be true of suicides. The suicide rate for people aged 18-19 increased 56% between 2008 and 2017. The rate of suicide attempts among people aged 22-23 doubled in the same period. The number of emergency room treatments for self-harm has increased, as well as hospital admissions for suicidal thoughts.

America's mental health crisis is very real. Yet explanations for this rising tide of despair feel insufficient. The trend doesn't seem tied to broad economic indicators -- though the death of the blue-collar economy in some places may play a role. Some have tried to blame the anxieties produced by a “gig economy” -- but indicting Uber for human hopelessness seems a stretch.

Ready access to highly addictive opioids certainly is a source of numbed despair in many communities. Ready access to firearms plays a role in many suicides. Digital addiction and social media have transformed -- and distorted -- the social lives of most young people. Digital connection can deliver the poison of cyberbullying intravenously, in a steady drip. The withdrawal from direct, human contact with friends is associated with a variety of mental health issues.

A few things we know. Many Americans have tragically limited access to mental health services. Some health insurance plans don't provide

adequate coverage. Some people are forced to drive long distances or wait on long lists. Some are discouraged from seeking help by continuing stigma. (About 20% of Americans

have lied to cover up their use of mental health services.) As a result of all these factors, more than one-third of adults with major depressive disorder don't get treated. About 60% of adolescents who have major depressive

episodes don't receive care.

We know that jails and prisons are not the best places to provide mental health care -- though likely more than 350,000 people with mental illness are currently behind bars. We should not trust many of these cases to the tender mercies of the penal system.

And we know that the deepest human needs can't be described in purely material or political terms. Though friendship, belonging and shared purpose are intangible, they are as essential to humans as air and bread. Yet nearly half of Americans say they are often lonely. About 20% of millennials report that they have no friends at all. Many of us have lost faith in the institutions that once gathered individuals into common effort and identity. Many of us have grown rusty in the task of social connection.

Mental health is different from many other policy issues. It involves both a public debate and personal responsibility to friends and acquaintances -- a duty of active, empathic, invasive concern.

Isolation is the growth medium for severe depression and suicidal thoughts. Without hearing some other, kinder voice, the echoes of self-condemnation can grow louder and louder. Without outside intervention, a downward spiral can be rapid, uninterrupted and deadly. People who struggle with depression need others in their lives who are alert to the signs of suffering and violate polite boundaries. They need someone who is willing to say: “You may not want to hear this, but I care about you and I'm worried about you. Please tell me how you are hurting and allow me to help.”

This voice can come from a health care professional. It can come from family members, or from friends and colleagues, or from a support group in which the confession of need is expected and welcomed. On mental health issues, progress will be measured by increased focus and resources -- but also by the loving welcome of our deepest selves.

(Washington Post Writers Group)

other  
voices

## PRISON: ‘He shot her because she was a possession’

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testimony of their experts, psychologist Robert Stanulis and sociologist William Brown. They had done so by presenting information that both men had previously testified as expert witnesses in other cases against defendants who were veterans and who had been diagnosed with PTSD by Stanulis.

Tripp overruled the objection.

The prosecution, led by Katie Suver, asked the court to impose a sentence of 25 years to life. They further asked that Zielinski serve 25 years before he would be eligible for parole with no early release for good behavior and that he not be allowed to participate in alternative incarceration programs.

The defense, led by Matthew Tracey, asked that the judge consider their client's circumstances. He argued that while Measure 11 is a baseline, or guide, it is not the definitive basis for which sentencing must occur.

The attorney appealed to Tripp to take into consideration Zielinski's exemplary military service and that he had served with distinction, that he had no prior criminal history and that he had been diagnosed with PTSD by Stanulis.

Describing the proposed sentence of 25 years to life as “cruel and unusual punishment,” Tracey asked the judge to “go over and above” what the law suggested and set a precedent by imposing only 10 years of jail time. He continued by stating that this was an opportunity for the judge to set a precedent showing that the court does not have to be tied to the Measure 11 law.

Suver argued that this was the standard sentence for murder cases similar to Zielinski's. She cited several cases as precedent to demonstrate her point that the Measure 11 standard is not unconstitutional and is not cruel and unusual punishment when applied to Zielinski.

“The defense's counsel wants to rely on the extreme emotional distress testimony which was discounted by the jury,” Suver said.

Tripp said that the jury had ruled that the defendant was not under extreme emotional distress, that he had intentionally and with malice shot his wife in the head.

“He killed an innocent person. He took the mother of his children,” Tripp said denying the defense's motion. She added that there are people who would think that a sentence of 25 years to life was not enough of a punishment for his crimes.

Suver also asked the judge to impose restitution of \$9,495.74 for medical bills, site cleanup, adoption fees and insurance fees. The judge granted this motion.

Tracey then requested that the judge consider the eight years that Zielinski had previously been incarcerated as time served and she agreed.

Zielinski's defense attorneys asked the court to waive their legal fees. Tripp asked the defendant if he had worked while previously incarcerated. He replied he had. She then asked him how much he earned. He responded that he had worked two different jobs while incarcerated with the most recent one paying him \$140 a month. She then asked

how much the defendant owed his attorneys. Zielinski's attorneys responded that the defendant would owe \$9,757.

The judge denied the defense attorney's request to waive the fees stating that the defendant should be able to pay them over the next 17 years.

Family members stepped forward to address the court and the defendant once both the state and defense had made their arguments for sentencing. Debra Geddes, the victim's sister, spoke first.

“Our relationship changed to accommodate you,” Geddes said describing how the defendant had managed and monitored his wife's communication and visits with her family. “Even after she has died we have had to accommodate you. We've had to watch our lives unfold in the media.”

“Your family can still hug you and share their lives with you, instead our family marks anniversaries, days we will not share with her,” she said.

“Take responsibility for your actions and let this family heal,” Geddes concluded.

Geddes was followed by Zielinski's oldest daughter, Hunter Montague and Hunter's mother Tami Montague.

“This was the most traumatic event that I've ever experienced. I am devastated. I will never forgive him for this,” Hunter said.

“It has been eight years, seven months and 24 days since you turned Hunter's world upside down and now you've continued to turn her world upside down. She's never gotten over that. You took away someone who was there for her,” Tami Montague said.

Rhonda Tupper, Lisa Zielinski's mother, spoke next.

“I am Lisa's grieving mother and you are an unspeakable monster. You took away Payton's mother and Hunter's stepmother and you took my only biological child. I will always despise you,” Tupper told the defendant.

Once the family had finished with their statements Zielinski asked if he could make a statement. The judge granted his request. He addressed his words to various members of Lisa Zielinski's family.

“To Mrs. Tupper, no words can undo what I did. I know what she was to you and what you were to her,” Zielinski said. He went on to tell the victim's sister, Debra Geddes, that he was sorry for taking Lisa from her. He told his children that he had failed them.

“I am sorry to you all but sorry won't change what I've done,” he finished.

The judge then addressed the family who were sitting in the gallery.

“I am so sorry. No one should have to endure what you have endured. I am aware of the devastation this man has brought to your family. He shot her because she was a possession and the possession no longer wanted to be possessed,” Tripp said.

At that point, Tripp formally announced that Zielinski was sentenced to 25 years to life for the murder of Lisa Zielinski with no early release or alternative incarceration programs and no option for parole until he has served the first 25 years.

## LEAGUE, continued from Page A1

McNary Youth Baseball uses the KLL Park when possible, but the cost of slot fees, or field rental fees, often pushes them into other parks where the fees are lower or non-existent. Keizer Little League currently holds the contract for park operations and will continue to do so through at least fall 2020.

Without question, the parties involved are wrestling with big questions and the fate of the park hangs in the balance, but much of the task force meetings are consumed in avoidance of the elephant in the room: does the community -- as a whole -- value the park and, if so, what should be done to maintain it and provide for any future investments?

For the members of the task force, it results in a lot of chicken-or-egg discussion about what is needed to chart a course forward.

The current plans, for a new board of directors to oversee the operations and improvement of the park, are dependent on generating enough revenue through the concession stand to pay for upkeep. The expectation is that parents and supporters of MYB and Keizer Little League will ramp up volunteer involvement to staff the concession stand.

After a rejuvenation of concession revenues in 2018, the cash flow dipped this year, said Brad Arnsmeier, president of Keizer Little League. A slippage in league participation overall in 2019 left its mark on the revenue generated.

“The problem is there were not enough games at the park, and even the events that we thought would pull us through didn't yield enough,” Arnsmeier said. “One tournament that could have had 30 to 40 games was down to five because the number of teams eligible to participate dropped.”

An estimate of expected conces-

sion revenue this year is not yet available, he added.

The task force would like to see annual concession revenues of at least \$35,000, but achieving that would require more volunteers during times when outside tournaments are in session.

June and July tend to be the slowest months for the park and prime time for adult and travel leagues. Matt Lawyer, the Keizer Parks Advisory Board member on the task force, suggested scheduling more tournaments during that time.

“To place additional burden on the youth leagues at a time when it is supposed to be a down time ... that's a big ask,” Arnsmeier said. Arnsmeier said the current demands of the Little League presidency are the reason he is choosing to step aside later this year.

Additionally, scheduling outside tournaments, which would have to happen before youth leagues get a chance to schedule their games, might also infringe on the availability of the park for Keizer youth.

If the park can't generate enough concession revenue -- using an all-volunteer workforce -- there will be no future improvements and maintaining the current facilities will become difficult.

Clint Holland, who ran the concession stand for long stretches throughout the history of the park but is not a member of the task force, said the leagues also need to generate more excitement about their teams to draw in the crowds that will purchase hotdogs, popcorn, candy and other treats from the concession stand. He mentioned Sprague Little League's recent appearance at the Little League World Series as one recent example.

“We are trying to make that change at the grassroots level and make [Keizer Little League] more attractive to competitive players,” Arnsmeier said.

Arnsmeier asked that the Keizer Little League and MYB be given the chance to meet in a less formal set-

ting to hash out what a true collaboration might look like and develop plans for scheduling that would generate concession revenues, eliminate slot fees altogether for both Keizer youth leagues, and develop a list of maintenance projects and desired improvements.

Perhaps the most telling moment of the meeting came after a question by City Councilor Dan Kohler: “Is this something that you want or is this just a pipe dream from the city?” Kohler did not specify whether he meant the current plans or the park as a facility.

After a protracted silence, Arnsmeier replied, “Yeah, there are good people in MYB, but they don't have the incentive [to get involved in operations] and we don't ask as much as we should. I feel like Little League does the lion's share of all the work, but it's still a community park. If we can find an agreement that gets both sides out there doing the work, the complex will be better for it.”

## Train for active shooter in Salem

Restlawn Funeral Home is hosting an active-shooter survival training program open to anyone in the community.

In order to promote local awareness, safety and preparedness, the training program will be presented by Lt. Tony Kollias of the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office.

It is a free 90-minute course designed to familiarize participants on crisis dynamics in different environments and police response tactics during an active shooter incident.

The course takes place on Thursday, September 19 at 6 p.m. and is completely free. For more information, visit [www.restlawnfh.com](http://www.restlawnfh.com).

## Artists: Submit for city's card contest

The Keizer Public Arts Commission invites artists of all ages to submit artwork which expresses the holiday season in Keizer for the 2019 Holiday Card Competition.

One piece of artwork will be selected by the Keizer Public Arts Commission to be reproduced as the City of Keizer's 2019 Holiday Greeting Card. The artist who submits the winning selection will receive a \$100 gift card to Michaels Arts & Crafts.

For more information, visit [www.keizer.org](http://www.keizer.org).

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