

# Opinion

## Alleviating rent burden up to all of us

Keizer is a rent burdened city. Well, what city isn't?

According to the Oregon Department of Housing and Community Services, Keizer is a rent burdened city. Fifty-four percent of renters in Keizer spend more than a third of their monthly income on rent.

Of Keizer's 5,215 renting households, more than a fourth are severely rent burdened—spending 50 percent or more for housing alone. Other cities in our region are in similar situations (the college cities of Corvallis and Eugene stand at more than 35 percent each).

The state of Oregon mandated that cities with a population of at least 10,000 hold public hearings about the issue. Keizer's city council held a public hearing at its meeting this week. Only two members of the public spoke before the council on the issue.

It is not surprising cities are rent burdened. Wages country-wide have not kept up with expenses. Rents at every level have steadily in-

creased since the Great Recession of 2008 ended. The cost of building multi-family residences keeps escalating; high rents have to be asked to offset the expense of the construction.

In a free market there is not much private incentive to build low-income housing; that usually falls on governments. The housing industry is not a charity, they have a profit motive just as any other business.

The burden of paying more than half of one's income on housing has forced families to make tough decisions: rent or food, rent or medicine. It is not difficult to imagine some people living on our streets or in their vehicles do so because of the cost of rent.

One public hearing will not make Keizer less rent burdened. The city is expected to house an additional 10,000 people in the coming years. Much of that housing will be multi-family housing in the categories of low income and very low income. The private sector can't be expected to bear that alone.

our opinion

## If MLB drops the Volcanoes, what then?

Via social media, the *Keizertimes* asked readers: If Major League Baseball eliminates the Volcanoes from its minor league system in 2021, how would that affect the Keizer and Salem communities?

Here are selected responses:

If more people went to the games it would be worth keeping the Volcanoes. I'm not into baseball, but I did enjoy going to a game or two with friends. It was fun. —Stephanie Duncan

Baseball is a cornerstone of Keizer's identity. Keizer All Stars Little League is known all over the valley. When my job takes me to other parts of the valley, when people find out I'm from Keizer, they often mention having heard of the All Stars, as well as the Volcanoes. To

lose the Volcanoes would be to lose a fairly big piece of Keizer's identity. —Chris Propeck

We'd be losing a large part of what makes Keizer, Keizer. I might even go so far as to argue that the development of the Volcanoes Stadium was the first development Keizer had that gave it an identity separate from that of Salem, despite the two cities'

names claiming ownership of the team. Without the Volcanoes Stadium, Keizer Station would be just another sad series of strip malls, no different that the multitude that can be found in Salem and the greater Portland metro area. Be sad to see them go. —Brennen Hankins

Our firm had four season seats behind home plate—dropped them

The federal, state and local governments will have to lead the push to build housing for those who can't afford to purchase their own home. Aside from constructing large housing projects (as was done in large cities in the 20th century), governments will need to formulate incentives for the private sector to join with the public sector to alleviate rent burdens on our most vulnerable citizens.

Tax incentives and fee waivers are but two tools for governments to offer. Another tool could be rent vouchers for a set percentage of rent with a limited time frame, say a voucher for 25 percent of a \$1,000 a month rental for two years to allow that family to put themselves in a better financial situation. In return, recipients would be required to be de facto superintendents of their buildings—maintaining, repairing and clearing.

As the cost all things in life continue to rise and wages stagnate, solutions must be sought. And that means doing more than just holding a public hearing to make us feel like we've accomplished something. We haven't. —LAZ

what's your view?

when it got hard to even give the tickets away. As a family, we've also had season tickets for years. That said, I only made it to four games last year. (My wife, daughter and father in law made it to a lot more.) If Volcanoes go away, I'll be saving a couple grand in ticket prices and we'll go to the Hillsboro Hops a few times to get our fix. We've continued to watch the attendance drop over the years and the service and fan experience has certainly taken a hit the last ten years, too. Honestly I won't miss it. —Elliot Kroon Groeneveld

Honestly, I'm gonna be that guy and say where was all this concern for the public transit of the Salem-Keizer area? It's baseball, true; it's been a cornerstone of the community but in all aspects so is the need for public transit. Maybe give it a decade break like they did Cherriots. —Dakota Saunders

## Stop fighting, start working for solutions

The quality of life in this country would undoubtedly improve if we'd get back to dealing with facts. For just one salient example, the Republicans are jumping all over Democrats in Washington, D.C., crying that their opponents are not doing anything but picking on the "poor" president of the United States. Yet, House Democrats have compiled a list showing that they, in the majority since the 2017 election, have passed 290 bills now stalled in the Senate by GOP

leadership, the largest number of bills held up between the houses of Congress in the nation's history.

What are examples of the stalled bills? The include healthcare reform, climate change, food safety, financial aid for the U.S. Postal Service, a job security act for wounded veterans, a Civil War battlefield preservation act, vision care for children, the naming of a federal courthouse in Iowa after former Representative Jim

gene h. mcintyre

Leach (R-Iowa), a National Historic Park named for Jimmy Carter, a bill to improve absentee ballot voting, a bill to improve cybersecurity, and the Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. Not incidentally, 60 of these bills have been approved by Republican votes.

The reader may agree or disagree with the examples and look at the entire list and find the pluses and minuses in his and her opinion. Whatever the case, it would seem rather obvious that the American people in general have items of importance and concern about stalled bills in Congress because these people can't get along due to partisan intransigence.

Is it not high time that we demanded maturity among these people to get over blaming each other for everything in order for them to selfishly and self-centeredly to win votes and, instead, began again to conduct the business of government for which the national representatives and senators were sent to Washington, D.C. and swore an oath to conduct and uphold.

And while they are at it, how about dealing with the American people by truth and honesty. We want a government that tells it like it is rather than each side trying to outdo the other in their chronic, daily lies, half-truths and exaggerations solely to win re-election while the United States of America comes to nothing but dead ends by failure to deliver on needs basic to continuation as a viable country. And that goes also to the goals of U.S. foreign policy which are constitutionally established to protect American interests and American security not sacrificed for any one individual's political or personal gain such as we are suffering through by days and weeks of energy spent to deal with unacceptable behavior that has led to charges and countercharges by politics at its worst.

The time is overdue for Americans to stand up and be counted, demanding that we get back to a rational and productive government. That condition of work in Washington, D.C. is the only way we can expect this great country of ours to be there for all of us in needs now and for young Americans in the future. (Gene H. McIntyre lives in Keizer and shares his opinion frequently in the *Keizertimes*.)

## Pipe bursts sparking downpour inside MHS

On the morning of Wednesday, Nov. 27, McNary High School suffered a small flood on the southeast corner of the school by the stairwell.

According to principal Erik Jerspersen, there was a water pipe that didn't have a seal properly attached. The seal, which was connected to the fire sprinkler line, burst while a

routine sprinkler test was being run, and water poured onto the floor.

Fortunately, maintenance crews were right on the scene and because the water fell onto concrete flooring, the damage was minimal. The school only had to only replace a new seal and a small number of ceiling tiles.



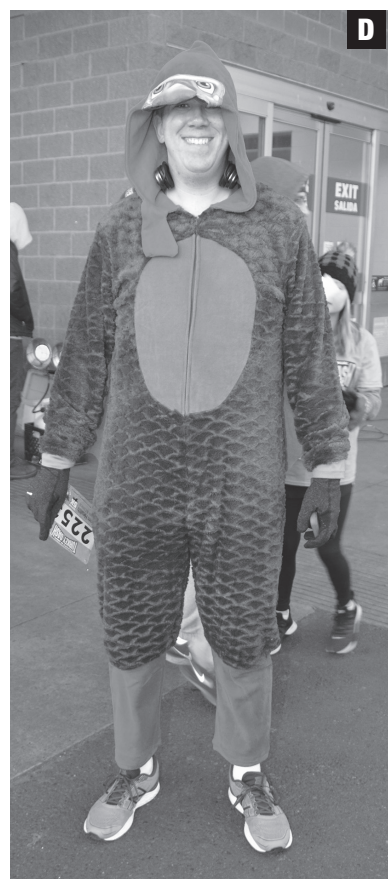
Turkey dashing



The Keizer Chamber of Commerce annual Turkey Dash drew a throng of runners out for a 5K on a brisk Thanksgiving Day morning, Nov. 28.



KEIZERTIMES/Lyndon A. Zaitz  
A: Runners take off from the starting line.  
B: Amy Ryan Courser and Bob Shackelford with the run mascot.  
C: Lauren Smith (left) and Meredith Patterson.  
D: Peter Rundquist dressed for the occasion.



## Toy Swap at Faith Lutheran Saturday

On Saturday, Dec. 7, Faith Lutheran Church on River Road North will host the area's first ever toy swap.

Between now and then, area residents can drop off any clean and gently used toys to the Keizer Civic Center or any of several of area businesses.

In addition to the civic center, toys can be left at Capitol Coffee, 555 Court Street N.E.; Marion County Public Works, 5155 Silverton Road N.E.; or Natural Grocers, 4250 Commercial Street S.E.

Toys can also be brought to Faith Lutheran Church only on Friday, Dec. 6, between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Toy "shopping" will be held between 9 to 11 a.m. on Dec. 7.

The following items will not be accepted: dirty, broken, ripped, chipped, ragged, chewed or marked items; gear such as car seats, strollers and cribs; anything missing parts or in disrepair; items that might be cutting, choking or lead hazards; or oversized items.

"Swaps are a great way to share materials and connect with the community. Swaps enable us to avoid throwing usable items away and helps showcase how fun reuse can be," said Jessica Ramey, a Waste Reduction Coordinator with Marion County.

## Pitch in to finish off Giving Baskets next week

Volunteers are needed to wrap up the final stages of the Keizer Network of Women (KNOW) Giving Basket program Dec. 11, 12 and 14.

Sorting and boxing of food is scheduled for 6 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 11. A big gift wrapping party takes place at 6 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 12, with the goal being to have the process completed that evening. Participants in the wrapping party should bring along scissors, tape and gift wrap. Delivery will begin on Saturday, Dec. 14, at 9 a.m.

Sorting and wrapping will take place at "Santa Central," the former location of Blockbuster Video, 5402 River Road N.

In addition to gifts, boxes of fresh food are also put together for the families.

While the gifts and food boxes

are handed out in December, the process starts each June, when school counselors in Keizer are notified and asked to start thinking of students who could use some gifts during the holidays.

Requests are hung on giving trees throughout the community. This year, a number of businesses and families stepped up to the plate to help provide food for the families. NW Dental Arts is supplying onions; Bob Shackelford of Homesmart Realty is paying for potatoes; Rob and Rhonda Brattain and the Brattain family are supplying peanut butter and jelly, beans and rice; Scenic Valley Farms is donating 1,500 pears; and Lorens Sanitation and Valley Recycling & Disposal joined forces to purchase hams. Each group is providing enough of their foods to feed 250 families.



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