

# Opinion

## A Mother's Day gift for the ages

By LYNDON ZAITZ

The COVID-19 pandemic will pose a challenge as we honor mom on this year's Mother's Day on Sunday, May 10.

In the past, families treated mom to a lovely brunch or dinner at a restaurant. This year there will be no large family gatherings around a big table at a sit-down restaurant. Many people will whistfully remember treating mom to a Mother's Day buffet with mounds of fruit, pastries and prime rib.

Inviting lots of people into our homes to celebrate mother will not happen this year. The coronavirus has turned life topsy turvy, but when it messes with our moms, it has gone too far, but there is nothing to be done. We love our mothers, but we all must continue to follow the pandemic protocols that keep us safe.

Thankfully there are enough retailers open to choose a gift. Online

shopping offers an alternative to purchasing just the right Mother's Day present. Many nurseries are open, allowing loving children to buy flower baskets for mom.

The best gift for mom in 2020 is safety and health. Imagine the response when mother opens a gift box of a set of colorful masks? This year presents an opportunity for us to make the ultimate, usable homemade gift. If one doesn't have a sewing machine, nor one ounce of sewing ability, we all know someone with a sewing machine and how to use it.

Too many people without masks are out in public and in stores. Medical experts tell us (and the facts bear them out) that wearing masks in public along with social distancing are key to minimizing our chances of contracting the disease.

A gift of a mask for mom on

Mother's Day only makes sense when mom wears it when she is out in public. A mask cannot be like a cloth shopping bag. Shopping bags are easy to forget at home or in the car. We have to assure that our mother's understand that using masks, unlike shopping bags, can be a matter of life and death.

The day will be warm and sunny on Sunday, May 10. Though the Keizer Fire District's annual Mother's Day breakfast has been cancelled this year, each family will celebrate mom in their own way. A pancake breakfast made at home can be just as meaningful. While the public gathering of more than 10 people is not alone, families members can gather in their vehicle and take a lovely day trip through the Willamette Valley, blooming in all its springtime glory.

During COVID-19 we must be creative when celebrating Mother's Day. Gifts of flowers and a mask or two will be appreciated. And needed. (Lyndon Zaitz is publisher and editor of the *Keizertimes*.)

zaitz writes

## Asking for a tax increase amid a pandemic

By KYLE G. McMANN

Marion County Fire District #1 has spent the past year communicating about its need for funding to

hire additional personnel and replace emergency apparatus and equipment. Our board of directors approved a resolution in November 2019 to be on the May 19 Primary Election ballot asking voters to renew and increase our local operating levy.

Then COVID-19 hit in the middle of our communicating about this critical funding source.

Here are the facts: Measure 24-441 renews our local operating levy that accounts for almost 30 percent of our property tax revenue. It also includes a 28-cent increase. If approved by voters, the levy would change from 71 to 99 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value. This increase would cost \$4.67 per month (or \$56 per year) for the owner of a \$200,000 home, which is an average for our service territory.

The fact is that these needs existed before the pandemic hit. Now,

our staffing shortages are more apparent than ever. For example, we have fewer volunteers responding to calls as they stay home to reduce their exposure to the virus, and the potential of bringing it home to their families. This means our overtime and temporary personnel costs are running \$35,000 higher a month.

Then there is the issue of skyrocketing costs for personal protective equipment (PPEs) for emergency personnel. A mask that cost \$1 in December is now \$6. Costs are higher for disinfectant, hand sanitizers and decontamination products because the demand is so great. We don't have many options here; we must pay whatever is needed to keep you and our first responders safe. In some cases we are reusing PPE that is not contaminated.

The pandemic also impacts the amount of revenue we receive. For example, we receive a fee from insurance companies, Medicare or Medicaid when we transport someone to a hospital. This revenue funds emergency personnel, ambulances

and medical equipment needed to respond to calls. More people staying home means fewer calls that would require such a service. Make no mistake — we want you to stay home! But, it's important to understand how this reduces funding for emergency services.

If the operating levy is approved by voters, we will hire additional personnel and set some money aside to replace apparatus and equipment. The reality is that some funding also will go to pay costs associated with COVID-19.

As a fire chief, firefighter, paramedic and registered nurse, I know how to respond to almost every emergency be it COVID-19, a residential fire, car accident or skinned knee. But I honestly have no idea what the outcome of our ballot measure will be. I just know that the need for emergency services funding is critical in these uncertain times.

(Kyle McMann is the Fire Chief for Marion County Fire District #1. The Fire District is a separate taxing authority and independent of Marion County. More information on the Fire District's operating levy request can be found at [www.mcfdl.com](http://www.mcfdl.com).)

guest column

## Problems with adding parts of Oregon to Idaho

Jim Parr's *Will Oregon shrink?* (*Keizertimes*, May 1) inspired reactions from provocations to thoughtful considerations. Meanwhile, for the last two legislative sessions, state House Republicans have walked out of the Capitol due to deadlocking disagreements with the Democrats, resulting in disabling divisiveness due to hidebound ideological differences taking center stage where not much happens there these days save for the spending of taxpayer dollars for legislator costs to assemble, where verbal battles enjoin threats of violence.

Parr's imagined Idaho writ large would be easy by geography but profoundly difficult by the fact that some communities in his expanded Idaho, such as Ashland, Bend, Coos Bay, Florence and Ontario could result in vigorous opposition, loud protest, and bring armed insurgents to the Capitol steps over address relocations. Then there's the political involvement in such a matter of financial consequence where interests would simply not roll over and

go along with Oregon losing a congressional district and Idaho gaining one.

Those who may find a redesign of the west's boundaries appealing may want to contemplate the possibility that such an arrangement would not work out so perfect for the former Oregonians. Idaho may still be very conservative like eastern and southern Oregon; yet, rumor has it that Boise and other places throughout Idaho, especially where business growth and population

are growing by outsider numbers just could become as progressive and even—horrors!—liberal as Portland and Eugene, with Salem coming up in third place among the three by adoption of modern views.

Oregon was established as a state on February 14, 1859. During subsequent years, when Republicans and Democrats vied to be in charge, one or the other managed in and out of power without, to my knowledge, one party walking out of the Capitol because they couldn't have their way. Which has always

been due (by any accounting of state history) with the ability of one party over the other in triumph by the attractiveness of its campaign promises and record, attracting more votes. Now, as it turns out, we have a condition not so prevalent in former times.

That relatively new condition is ideology defined here is people who've taken the oath of office to serve all the citizens of Oregon but really come to the Capitol as uncompromising, dogmatic apostles dedicated to one way of thinking: unyielding and fixed in their approach to all matters legislative.

Therein lies the real challenge of our time: entrenched, immovable attitudes versus minds open to discussing differences, using the art of compromise and listening skills. Without practicing resolution to disputes by compromise, our democracy has reached critical mass and highly likely near its end with jackboots, clenched fists and weapons of war a daily spectacle at our Capitol.

(Gene McIntyre lives in Keizer. He shares his opinion regularly in the *Keizertimes*.)

gene h. mcintyre

## letters

### Radio veteran's lament

To the Editor: Call this an old radio guy's lament: While there is no doubt (except in the mind of a certain "stable genius")

that the Russians meddled in the last election and are at it again—sowing discontent on new media to improve the reelection chances of the aforementioned Tweeter-in-Chief, I posit that the greater danger is old media

domestic propaganda.

Home grown hokum, conspiracy theories (Here's looking at you, Alex Jones) and plain lies are broadcast daily on cable and on our own local radio stations and have been for years. "Deep State" Limbaugh was spouting crowd pleasing clap-trap on AM radio before Cadet Bone Spurs was a gleam in Putin's eye.

And now, in the time of coronavirus, Limbaugh, Hannity, Ingrahm, Savage and all the other stars of the theater of fear and loathing pose an even greater threat to the democracy—cheerleading the clueless and careless, the anti-vaxxers, the gun toters and flag wavers who would open the country up now! "Damn the virus, full speed ahead." All in an effort—just like Vlad the Trolle—to ensure the reelection of Donald J. Trump, the germophobe who let a germ overrun his country.

**Martin Doerfler**  
Keizer

# City's service charges spike

## Online bill pay to blame

By ERIC A. HOWALD  
*Of the Keizertimes*

Earlier this year, the City of Keizer switched to a new service that was more "friendly and integrated" for end users.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the closure of the Keizer Civic Center to walk-in traffic, usage of the payment portal has spiked and resulted in higher-than-anticipated bill for service fees.

"With the increase in the activity, there is an increase in service fees," said Tim Wood, Keizer finance director.

On Monday, May 6, Keizer city councilors had to approve the transfer \$20,000 from one account to another to cover the surging costs.

It was a tough pill to swallow for Keizer City Councilor Dan Kohler, who said it was "a lot" to pay in service charges.

Kohler asked whether the city

would have to absorb the service charges or recoup the money in some other form.

Wood said the charges would normally be factored into water and stormwater rates, but the city has decided to forego increases in those utilities during the coming fiscal year.

"We will be absorbing them for the immediate future and it will be a slow down in capital outlay," Wood said.

He added that the new system has increased efficiency.

The online bill payment system is owned by Springbrook Software, which collects a .30-cent fee on every transaction is addition to significantly higher fees on returned and rejected payments. If every one of Keizer's roughly 14,000 households paid utility bills online, the Spring Software would collect approximately \$4,200 a month in fees.

Springbrook Software was purchased by a California-based private equity company, Accel-KKR, in January 2020. The Accel-KKR website boasts of possessing "\$9 billion in committed capital across its buyout, growth capital and credit funds."

## police scanner

### MONDAY, APRIL 27

5:39 a.m. - Failure to perform duties of a driver when property is damaged and reckless driving in the 7000 block of Parktree Lane NE.

11:07 a.m. - Arrest on warrant in the 5000 block of River Road N.

11:07 a.m. - Crime damage in the 5000 block of River Road N.

### TUESDAY, APRIL 28

5:49 a.m. - Reckless driving at the intersection of River Road N and Homewood Court N.

4:28 p.m. - Driving under the influence of intoxicants in the 700 block of Dietz Avenue NE.

6 p.m. - Motor vehicle theft in the 4000 block of Shoreline Drive N.

7:16 p.m. - Stolen vehicle in the 1000 block of Clearview Avenue NE.

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29

12:01 a.m. - Failure to perform duties of a driver when property is damaged in the 4000 block of River Road N.

10:15 a.m. - Fleeing an officer at Rivercrest Drive N and Dennis Lane N.

5 p.m. - Forgery in the 5000 block of River Road N.

### THURSDAY, APRIL 30

1:16 a.m. - Unlawful possession of methamphetamine in the 3000 block of River Road N.

12:45 p.m. - Identity theft in the 1000 block of Eugene Court NE.

3:12 p.m. - Traffic accident at the intersection of River Road N and Manzanita Street NE.

### FRIDAY, MAY 1

8:30 a.m. - Arrest on warrant for criminal in possession of counterfeit currency in the 4000 block of Gary Street NE.

5:22 p.m. - Vandalism in the 5000 block of McLeod Lane NE.

9:06 p.m. - Unlawful use or carry of a weapon in the 1000 block of Dearborn Avenue NE.

### SATURDAY, MAY 2

12 a.m. - Unlawful entry into vehicle in the 3000 block of River Road N.

12:48 a.m. - Arrest on warrant for unlawful possession of methamphetamine in the 3000 block of River Road N.

2 a.m. - Theft from motor vehicle in the 100 block of Garland Way N.

1:12 p.m. - Possession of methamphetamine in the 1000 block of Alder Drive NE.

9:07 p.m. - Unlawful possession of methamphetamine in the 5000 block of River Road N.

### SUNDAY, MAY 3

10:28 p.m. - Assault, coercion and strangulation in the 4000 block of Northside Drive NE.

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Enter digits from 1-9 into the blank spaces. Every row must contain one of each digit. So must every column, as must every 3x3 square.

