

# Opinion

## The coronavirus is not gone

The coronavirus is not gone. The virus that causes COVID-19 has not been eradicated, it is still very much virulent in this country and around the world. New cases are being reported every day, even here in Oregon.

It is vital to re-open and salvage our economy. States across the nation have re-opened, many, like Oregon, are opening in phases. Some counties in our state are ready to enter Phase Two of Gov. Kate Brown's re-opening strategy.

While it is paramount to get the economy rolling again, it is more important to safeguard the public. Social

distancing and the wearing of face masks are key to stopping the spread of coronavirus. Some may think that the pandemic is over because society is slowly re-opening, but the protocols are still in place and they need to be followed.

Experts who warn of a second wave of COVID-19 cases should be heeded. Where we are seeing a spike in cases is where we see large gatherings of people not social distancing and fewer people wearing masks.

Some retailers require customers to wear masks before they enter

their stores; many businesses have floor markings to assure distancing and have erected barriers between customers and employees to protect both. We should expect these safety protocols to be in place for quite some time. We should follow them, if for no other reason than it protects the health of ourselves and others.

Scientists around the world are working furiously to develop a vaccine and to find a path to eradication. Until those things happen it is our responsibility as citizens of the world to do our part to assure we're not helping it spread.

—LAZ

editorial

## Opening night!

By **JERRY WALKER**

Well, Wednesday, June 17, should have been Opening Night for the Salem-Keizer Volcanoes. Reflecting for a moment on what would have been my 32nd Opening Night in professional baseball spanning five decades, the 1980s through the 2020s.

The two most memorable nights came in 1989 and 1997. It was total euphoria in 1989, the first Opening Night. Everything was new, excitement was in the air, Jeff Smulyan, owner of the Seattle Mariners, delivered a special Mariners' bouquet of flowers that were situated on home plate adding to a festive pre-game ceremony. Tuxedos were donned by my partner and I for the special occasion and many first-time experiences were about to unfold.

The Bellingham Mariners trailed 4-2 in the bottom of the ninth with two outs. While winning the game appeared hopeless, it also seemed secondary in importance to the overall experience—that was until Corey Paul stepped to the plate. With runners on first and second, Paul launched a long home run over the right field wall and it was game over—Bellingham Mariners win on a walk-off home run.

Memories of 1989 were easily surpassed by those of 1997, a year that celebrated an almost unbelievable accomplishment of building Volcanoes Stadium in just under five months and bringing professional baseball back to the mid-Willamette Valley. Fans numbering 4,906 came, in a steady light rain, to help dedicate the stadium. The glamour of tuxedos in 1989 was replaced with a sensational stadium dedication speech by City Councilor Al Miller, concluding with, "It is with great pride that I hereby dedicate this stadium. May it long serve as an inspiration to others and as a symbol of who we are and what we are."

The first pitch was brought in via helicopter by Mayor Dennis Koho. Due to wet grounds, the game was never played. This fact seemed lost on all those who attended, who left in delight, as the Salem-Keizer Volcanoes had been born and the community had a terrific new stadium.

It is hard not to wonder what the future holds. The coronavirus has taken its toll and the damage is far from over. As some businesses are finally reopening, others are closing forever. Civil unrest has unfolded and America

is fighting for its survival as we once all knew it. Our liberty in question. The virus has shutdown all professional sports and has impacted society in a manner greater than words can express. What will be next? At times like these, we need to remember everything we have to be thankful for—sometimes we forget and sometimes it is just hard to do because the impact of what is happening is so great.

We will miss the smiles of all the fans that will not be attending Opening Night ceremonies. Opening Night is so special as it is a new beginning while at the same time it creates memories. As James Earl Jones' character in *Field of Dreams* so eloquently spoke, "And they'll walk off to the bleachers and sit in their short sleeves on a perfect afternoon. And find they have reserved seats somewhere along the baselines where they sat when they were children. And cheer their heroes. And they'll watch the game, and it'll be as they'd dipped themselves in magic waters. The memories will be so thick, they'll have to brush them away from their faces."

(Jerry Walker is owner, president and general manager of the Salem-Keizer Volcanoes.)

guest column

## Special session unwise during pandemic

By **BILL POST**

Governor Kate Brown and the majority in the Oregon Legislature are anxious to hold a "special session" on June 24. I want to know how this is good for Oregon in the current pandemic? How exactly does the Legislature hold a special session without implementing Phase 3 of the Governor's reopening guidelines?

Consider that the Oregon State Capitol is an 80-year-old "incubator" for viruses now, which is one of the reasons the Legislature invested in massive building upgrades that are still underway. Anyone who's ever worked there is very familiar with the infamous "Capitol Crud" that flies through the building every session. How could anyone even consider meeting there now? Even if only the 90 legislators met, what if they took COVID-19 back to their districts? Some counties have no cases and especially no deaths.

Let's talk about transparency and equity. There will be no public input.

It will all be electronic. "But Bill, it's all online now!" Really? And every Oregonian has access to a computer and the internet? I was not aware that that was true. If it were, then why are we having problems with "distance learning" in our schools? There will only be written testimony allowed to be submitted. That means no public testimony or questions. Regardless of the Constitutional issues, how is this fair and equitable to all Oregonians?

Let's look at "fair" in regard to the very guidelines that all of Oregon must live with right now. The state Capitol is in Marion County. Marion County is not even in Phase Two of the reopening. Even if it were, the limit on "large gathering" is 250 people. There is no way *not* to have over 250 people in the Capitol. Just 90 legislators and one staffer each is 180.... that's even disregarding the lobbyists, and most importantly, the public. We must consider the health and welfare of all Oregonians, which is impossible with a session at this time.

While Oregonians must abide by

the guidelines, the Legislature is exempt? Although there is important work to be done, let us not jeopardize the health and safety of all of Oregon while conducting that work. Being a member of the Legislature, I believe in equity for all Oregonians. Which is why having a special session is unfair to other Oregonians. For example: student-athletes who can't play sports. Businesses that can't operate. Employees who are still unemployed and can't go to work. Seniors who can't get out nor have visitors.

Governor Brown has to decide. Either we are out of this pandemic now and can meet in large groups, opening Oregon completely or the outbreak is still too high and we must maintain the current status. Oregon's health and safety is of the utmost importance. The science is clear, Oregon is still in a vulnerable place. We must not exacerbate that by having hundreds of people in a close fitting, older building. This can wait until October. We cannot have both.

(Bill Post represents House District 25. He can be reached via email at rep.billpost@oregonlegislature.gov.)

guest opinion

## Current events call for look at policing

By **GENE H. McINTYRE**

As a 21-year resident of Keizer, I must have come of age.

Seriously, I'm an adult citizen who cares about what happens here with interests that include local policing. A timely event was the *Keizertimes* interview with Keizer Police Chief John Teague. (*Policing with minority perspectives in mind, June 12*). The chief said that he possesses empathy for persons of color with whom he is acquainted, while details on what "procedural justice" and "agency fairness" mean came up short in terms of specifics.

Study of policing in America have revealed some grim findings. Research finds that U.S. police officer killings during a typical year add up

to 31 for every 10 million. Our population is close to 330 million while simple arithmetic reveals the astonishing total annual number. Meanwhile, in two western European nations, Germany and the United Kingdom, Deutschland finds one killed by police for every 10 million; the U.K. comes in at .05 per 10 million.

Our police are more likely to encounter other Americans in possession of firearms and are trained to respond pre-emptively. In the U.S., the threshold for use of firearms is much lower than those in virtually all of Europe. Here, a police officer can use his weapon when he believes there's a good reason to do so or thinks his life is in danger.

In Europe, police officers infrequently carry a firearm weapon and use it only as a final resort.

American police training requires about 20 weeks while classroom education and field training in Europe averages two years. Those who argue for a longer training program see a need for more education in the classroom and in the field here in the United States. Another difference here is the availability of surplus U.S. military equipment.

Of course, used desks and chairs, file cabinets and the like help save city budgets. However, armored vehicles, battle helmets and body armor convert a local police force to combat military, resembling those serving overseas against enemy forces. American citizens are Constitutionally given freedoms of assembly, speech and peaceful protest.

It appears timely and appropriate to hear from Chief Teague as to what the people can count on from him and our taxpayer-funded police officers in the administration of their sworn duties to protect and defend. Has the time come—as with some U.S. communities elsewhere in trial mode—to "defund" (defined here as a highly diversified public safety workforce, emphasizing community policing) some public safety funding dollars so the future better serves all of us?

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

one man's opinion

## District forges ahead with improvements at Claggett Creek MS

By **MATT RAWLINGS**  
*Of the Keizertimes*

Dozens of construction projects will be taking place across Salem-Keizer this summer, including a \$3.7 million project at Claggett Creek Middle School.

Thanks to the \$677 million Salem-Keizer bond project, which was passed by voters just over two years ago, Claggett Creek will undergo upgrades that include repurposing two general classrooms into a science lab, cafeteria expansion, roofing replacement, plus library and media improvements.

Construction was supposed to get started in mid-June, but with the COVID-19 pandemic keeping kids out of in-person classes, the project began in late-May.

"The most exciting part is the state-of-the-art science teaching center going in. There has been a lot of work that has gone into that aspect of the project with our science teachers and bond planning team," said Claggett Creek Principal Aaron Persons.

Persons says that the district has been pushing for more access to science education across all grade levels and that his students are excited for the school makeover.

"It sparks interest in kids. These kids will be going to McNary and McNary has programs that will meet any of the science needs that are kids have, so we try to light the fire in them," Persons said.

The science center will give

Claggett Creek the opportunity to expand their career exploration lab — which just concluded its first year and offered instruction on electrical wiring, small engine maintenance, plumbing, 3-D printing, app creation and laser technology.

Blood draw simulations, stress testing and manufacturing, forensic science will be added to the unit for the 2020-21 school year.

"There is just a very wide variety of options," Persons said.

The cafeteria expansion, which will increase lunch seating by more than 30 percent, is a much-needed upgrade according to Persons.

"Our cafeteria wasn't keeping up with our growing enrollment. We had over 1,000 kids last year," Persons said. "Our cafeteria has been very crowded. During lunchtime, every seat was full, so kids would kind of have to scope out their seat when they would walk in. It will now be more opened up and it will be a more appropriate and comfortable environment."

Although the project is ahead of its timetable, the bond team does not plan on advancing construction, which is scheduled to be completed at the start of September before kids begin the school year.

"That allows us some flexibility in the schedule. If unforeseen things come up, we will be able to adjust," said Karma Krause, the Capital Projects Public Engagement Specialist for the district.

## Pandemic assistance items can be dropped off at St. Ed's

There are now expanded hours for the public donation site at St. Edward Catholic Church.

In April, Marion County Public Health stood up a donation site at the church two days a week. Donations are now being accepted five days a week from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The site gathering food and household necessities for community members, as well as items for community partners that provide assistance to individuals who are experiencing homelessness.

Volunteers working the center Monday, May 19, said baby items (food, diapers, pull-ups and wipes) and travel-sized personal care items (including feminine hygiene products) are among the most desperately-needed in the area. Homemade, cloth face masks can also be donated.

Items are distributed directly to service providers or community members from Marion Polk Food Share and its network of local food banks.

The church is located at 5303 River Road N, in Keizer.

The donation site is accepting the following new, unopened and

unexpired items:

- Food (peanut butter, tuna, canned fruit and veggies, oatmeal, pasta, spaghetti sauce, soups, rice, and beans)
- Toilet paper
- Cleaning supplies (hand soap, dish soap, disinfectant spray, paper towels, garbage bags, and laundry detergent)
- Pet food (dog and/or cat)
- Packaged digital thermometers
- Cloth masks (clean homemade cloth masks are acceptable)

The drive-thru process has been designed with social distancing measures for the safety of volunteers and the donating public. Please load items for donation in the back seat or trunk of your vehicle. Volunteers can then unload the items without making physical contact with drivers.

Employees of Marion County Health Department, the National Guard and members of local CERT teams are providing staffing to cover donation intake.

For more information, contact Marion County at: Health\_Donations@co.marion.or.us.

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