

Public Square

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Keizer's response to ice storm

Some people laid in bed, awake, listening to the crack of trees breaking under the weight of ice, worrying that a tree may fall on their home.

Others struggled with a power outage that left them in the dark and unable to communicate due to cable and internet service interrupted by the ice storm.

Keizer's electricity providers quickly went to work to get the power back on. For many the power was off for a few days; houses grew cold and food spoiled in refrigerators.

Sunday morning dawned. The damage in the light of day was widespread. And Keizer residents did what they always do: they helped their neighbors. The sound of chainsaws rang out across the city as downed trees and limbs were cut into manageable pieces.

It was not only the manual help Keizerites offered one another, it was psychological and spiritual help, as well. People checked on the status of family, friends and neighbors. Those who needed a warm place during the power outages got one through the altruism of others.

Keizer does not receive hazardous winter weather on a regular basis. When the city is hit with deep snow or an ice storm many of us are not prepared. Last week's weather is a reminder that we all should be ready for emergencies.

Society has been trained to call 9-1-1 in an emergency, which is the correct course of action when a person is injured or in medical distress. The 9-1-1 dispatch service for our area was inundated with calls from Keizer and Salem. Reportedly, at one time there were hundreds of calls swamping the system. It is indisputable that 9-1-1 be called in emergencies.

When weather creates chaos you can bet that first responders are on the streets. Not every cracked tree or fallen limb is an emergency, it is a major inconvenience and annoyance, but not an emergency. It is situations such as these when our resilience kicks in and we get to work to help ourselves and others.

Besides the symphony of chainsaws throughout town the chorus of smoke alarms beeping rang out in homes in every neighborhood. Each year public service announcements remind us to change smoke alarm batteries, many do. Those who didn't change the battery with the onset of daylight savings time in November, heard about it if their power went out and alarm batteries unchanged. (Daylight standard time begins March 14.)

We rarely think about emergencies until they happen. Like the Boy Scout motto, we all need to be prepared. That's the nature of emergencies, they

seldom telegraph their arrival. Keizer suffered through an ice storm last weekend, what other emergencies might visit Keizer that we must prepare for? An earthquake is something the public sector is preparing for. Our schools are being retrofitted to withstand earthquakes as bridges and overpasses are on our highways.

Allocating money for disasters is money well spent. Though we can forecast a weather front, sometimes nature is unpredictable and we have to be ready for whatever comes.

What to do? Come spring homeowners can inventory the trees on their property and identify those that can cause problems in a wind or ice storm. Consulting a tree service is a good start.

Emergencies are not limited to cold and ice. The possibility of a wildfire tearing through Keizer is not foreign. In today's climate change scenario, in the right conditions, a fire could rage through town. At that point cutting shrubs away from the house is too late. It is one way we can be prepared for an emergency.

Public safety agencies have no shortage of information about preparing emergency kits and what to do during a disaster. That information is always available to the public.

Let us learn the lessons this month's ice storm has taught us. Let us be prepared for whatever comes next.

—LAZ

editorial

other voices

Senator, impeach thyself

By DEBRA J. SAUNDERS

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell told Republican senators that their vote on impeachment should be based on "conscience."

Conscience? It apparently has less of a presence on Capitol Hill than partisan identity.

Consider the words of Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Mo., a likely presidential hopeful in 2024 anxious to court the Trump vote.

During a *Fox News* interview last week, Hawley charged the impeachment effort is a "totally illegitimate" and has "no basis in the Constitution." And he chastised Democrats for trying to "silence and write out" the votes of 74 million Trump supporters.

Thing is, Hawley has no credibility when it comes to legitimacy. Hawley was ready to overrule 81 million votes legally cast for now-President Joe Biden.

In December, when Hawley announced he would not vote to certify the Electoral College vote, he gave birth to the fantasy that on Jan. 6, Donald Trump's most outraged supporters somehow could persuade Congress to overturn, rather than certify, Electoral College results putting Joe Biden in the White House.

Consequences? Not an issue.

Up until Hawley's announcement, Washington had expected Trump's claims he actually won the election would fizzle when Congress did its job on Jan. 6. Instead, there was mayhem and death.

Hawley also called impeachment a "political vendetta" and a waste of time when Washington should be concentrating in getting out vaccines to the American public.

If only Hawley had thought about sticking to the Senate's business before he blew up the Republican Party.

I've listened to objections to this impeachment, and yes, they point to a double standard.

If it's so wrong to challenge the outcome of an election, Trump supporters ask, why make Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., the head House impeachment prosecutor? Raskin, after all, challenged Florida's pro-Trump electoral vote on technical grounds in 2017.

Be it noted that then-Vice President Biden ruled Raskin out of order. And that was the end of that.

When leftists torched American cities during protests ostensibly meant to promote social justice, Democratic politicians weren't put in a position

where they were expected to forcefully denounce violence generated on their side of the aisle.

Months after the riots began, Biden issued a statement in which he actually blamed Trump for inflaming the country.

On January 11, Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., asked on *Fox News* where the outrage was when protesters of police shootings accosted his wife and him after they attended Trump's Republican National Convention acceptance speech on the South Lawn.

To those who say that Trump's remarks incited a riot, Paul added, he never used that standard on Sen. Bernie Sanders after a left-wing activist who had volunteered on Sanders' campaign shot Rep. Steve Scalise, R-La., during softball practice.

Paul has a point, but it is dwarfed by the enormity of what happened on Jan. 6. Egged on by a president who falsely claimed the election was stolen from him, partisans stormed the Capitol to overturn an election by force.

If Hawley hadn't proposed trying to pressure Congress to do something it was not entitled to do, there may not have been a riot on Jan. 6.

So, I guess it's too bad Hawley has issues with impeachment. But really, he only has himself to blame.

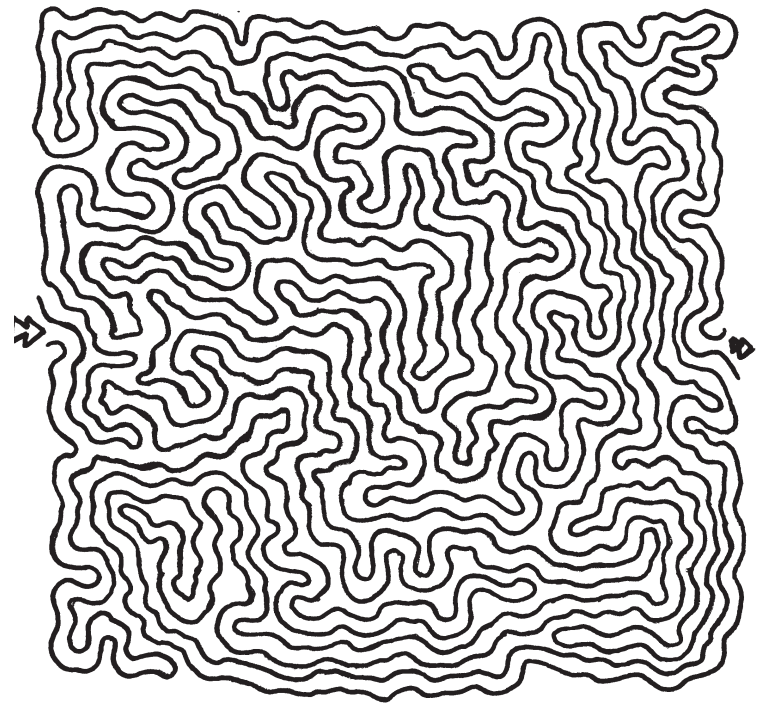
(Creators Syndicate)

sudoku

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.

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maze



Maze by Jonathan Graf of Keizer

YOU Matter

The past year has been challenging.

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have been able to rely on your local community newspaper to

report the facts and provide you with the information you need to make informed decisions.

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