

KEIZER PUBLIC SQUARE

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They want to be heard

The tapestry that is American is weaved with a multitude of colors and textures. That is the beauty of our country—and our community. Keizer has as many different residents as any other part of America. Democracy gives all people a voice in society and how it is shaped for the benefit of all.

That has been demonstrated by citizens who have shared their strong beliefs with the Keizer City Council over recent weeks. The issue of equality and inclusivity has been addressed by Keizerites at council sessions.

The testimony from citizens was heartfelt and emotional, some citing their personal experiences with racism. The councilors were not unmoved, but the issues will come up again and again as long as some feel that they are not being heard.

The response from some councilors is there is work to be done to make Keizer a community that values every citizen and respects people for who they are and how they live their lives. That's what America is about. Many of the remarks to the council came as a result of the Keizer Pride event

Editorial

held at Chalmers Jones Park on June 12. Some wondered why Pride rainbow flags could not be flown at city hall.

Governments at every level across the United States fly pride flags as well as other acknowledgements of the LGBTQ+ community. These displays of support are just that, support. It is no different than flying POW/MIA flags.

The council sets city policy. Councilors can acknowledge all types of people, recognizing the months throughout the year that highlight the accomplishments and achievements of those in LGBTQ+ community, Hispanics, Russians, military veterans, differently-abled, etc. Everyone is worthy of value and respect. If the council can recognize Juneteenth, then recognizing other days and months should be axiomatic.

—LAZ

Wins at end of session

As I write this column Gov. Kate Brown signed HB 2648 into law. Finally, Oregonians can skip the doctor's prescription to purchase Sudafed.

When the 2021 legislative session began, passing this bill was one of my top priorities. Of course, supporting businesses, balancing the budget and fully funding education are also on my priority list and I have supported many of these concepts with my vote.

Of the legislation I personally introduced, HB 2648 was on the top of the list, along with HB 2646 (The Oregon Kratom Consumer Protection Act), which regulates kratom. In lieu of the pandemic, wildfires, and tragedy our state has overcome in the past year, I know these concepts do not seem of grave importance, but good policy is always important.

You have most likely seen the "KRATOM SOLD HERE" signs at just about every market on the street, but might not know what kratom actually is. Kratom has been consumed safely for centuries in Southeast Asia and Americans use it in the same way that coffee is used for increased focus and energy boosts. Many use kratom for pain management without the opioid side effects. The problem in Oregon is that adulterated products are being sold. That means there is Kratom spiked with dangerous drugs like heroin, fentanyl, and morphine. You may have read stories about kids overdosing on kratom, and that's because the product is not regulated so there is no way to know what is being sold. Kratom in its pure form is a natural product. Adulterated kratom is a potentially dangerous product.

HB 2646 regulates this product to ensure the product being sold is pure. The bill also

FROM THE Capitol By BILL POST

bans those under age 21 from purchasing this product. Currently, HB 2646 is in the Joint Committee on Ways and Means and has large support from both parties. I am hopeful the bill will pass and soon be voted on in both chambers. There are many important issues that have been and are being addressed this session, and these are two of them. I figure that lowering health-care costs and protecting our kids are very important.

Although these two concepts have been on the top of my list, I've also been working on other very important issues. With the help of my colleagues, I helped pass legislation that brings property tax relief for homeowners that lost their homes in the wildfires. We banned the public disclosure of private information on the internet. We fully funded Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), not only in Marion County, but across the state and more.

Even in a super minority, this is just a small amount of the work I've been able to accomplish with the help of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. I imagine this session will wrap up some time at the end of next week and I am hopeful the 2022 short session will be fully opened to the public again.

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Bill will hurt newspapers

By BRIGITTE SCHMIDT and LAURIE HIEB

Newspapers and magazines go to every corner of this state. Notwithstanding increased digital access, paper publications are delivered to tens of thousands of homes that lack broadband internet and homes where readers simply are more comfortable with the familiar format of paper or want to save magazines on travel, food, world events or hobbies.

Oregon's newspapers and magazines care deeply about environmental responsibility. Newsprint and magazine stock paper come from certified forests, are fully compostable and biodegrade in a manner of months. Newsprint is so safe that it can be used as vegetable garden mulch. Inks are linseed-oil-based and non-toxic, and adhesives are water-soluble.

A well-intentioned but misguided piece of legislation in the Oregon State Senate, SB-582, would create an extensive Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) system for municipal solid waste. The bill recognizes that magazines and newspapers are different from other materials by allowing fees to be paid through advertising, but the fees simply should not apply to non-toxic, biodegradable materials - again, newspapers and magazines biodegrade within months.

News is vital to American civic life, and legislation causing financial hardship to newspapers and magazines will erode citizen access to factual and trusted news and information. Newspapers are the sole source of local news for many communities throughout the state. Coverage of town meetings, food pantry locations, classified ads and business news are the lifeblood of community newspapers. Yet



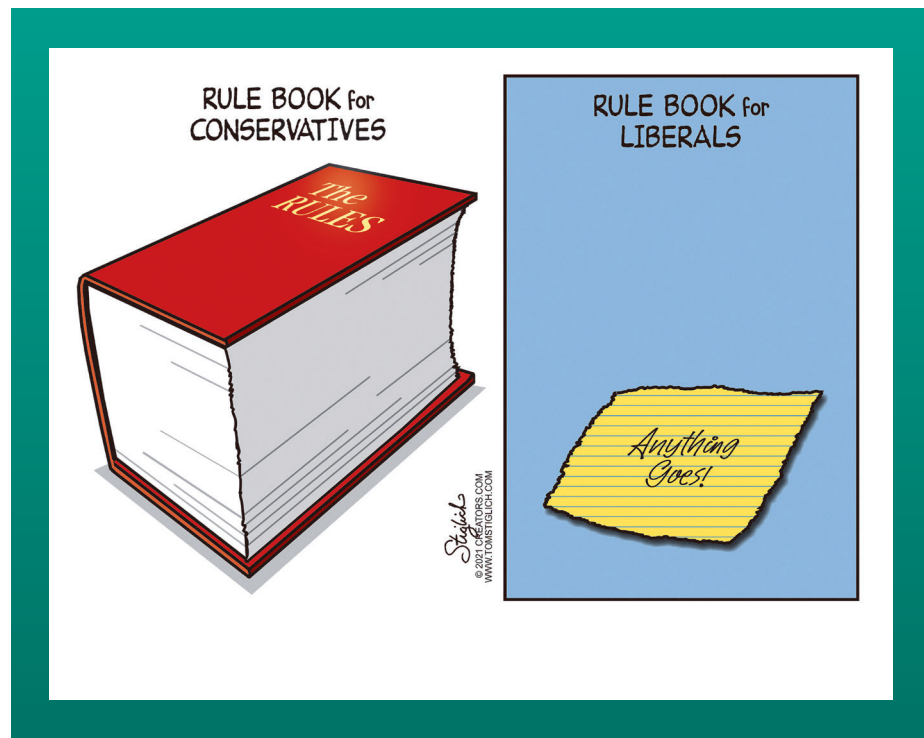
this legislation discriminates against news and information published on paper, as opposed to information that is circulated in digital formats.

EPR systems in other jurisdictions have failed to increase recycling rates for paper, which are already much higher than other products. In British Columbia, recycling rates are trending downwards while producer fees have increased markedly. This is not tenable in Oregon, when economic conditions related to the pandemic have caused significant reduction in advertising revenues for magazines and newspapers. To offset marked increases in cost, the legislation could force publications to eliminate home delivery to rural areas, exacerbating the digital divide, and cut journalism jobs.

A recent study by Broadbandnow ranks Oregon 34th among states based on broadband deployment, speeds and access to low-priced plans. Those without broadband depend on paper.

We strongly urge the Oregon State Legislature to consider the impact of this legislation on magazines and newspapers. There are more appropriate ways to reclaim post-consumer waste without disadvantaging the state's vital news and information sources.

(Brigitte Schmidt Gwyn is President and Chief Executive Office of MPA - The Association of Magazine Media. Laurie Hieb is Executive Director of the Oregon News Publishers Association.)



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