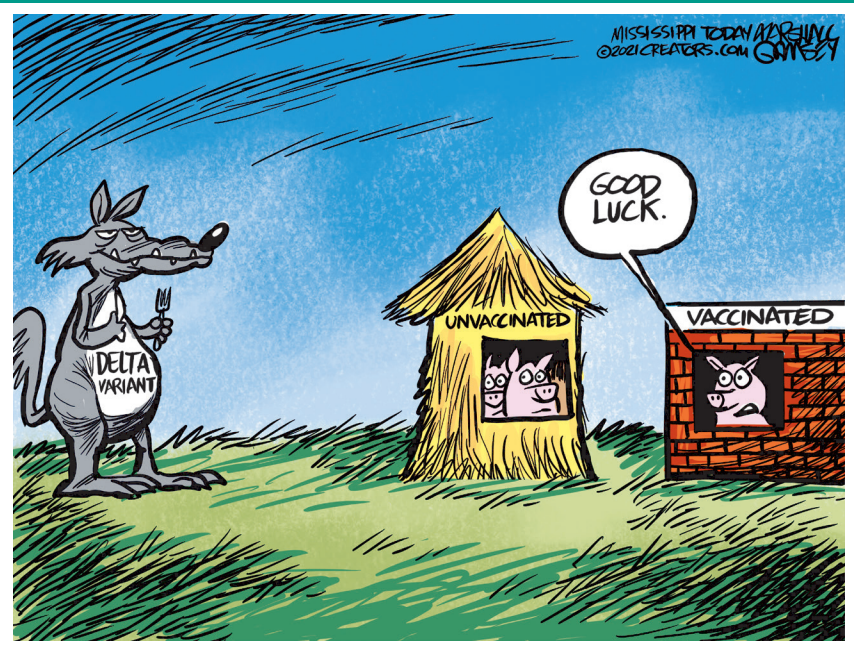


K PUBLIC SQUARE

PUBLIC SQUARE welcomes all points of view. Published submissions do not necessarily reflect the views of the Keizertimes



Welcome, Wes Hare

Editorial

The Keizer City Council voted on Tuesday, July 6, to hire Wes Hare as interim city manager.

City operations have run smoothly since the resignation of the previous city manager in April. City Manager Pro Tem Tim Wood, the city's finance director, served well, yet a pro tem has limited powers. As interim city manager Wes Hare will have all the responsibilities allowing city business to be conducted apace.

Hare is not eligible to be considered for the permanent city manager position, which is a shame, considering his resume: city manager in Albany, LaGrande and Oakridge as well as consulting overseas. His specialties include community development and financial management.

The city council will begin a national search for a permanent city manager, a process that will include plenty of public input. Until a person is hired, Wes Hare will serve the city well, he will serve for six months or more, plenty of time for him to leave his mark on the city.

Thank you, Tim Wood, for stepping into the position to serve the community. Welcome to Keizer, Wes Hare. We are glad you are here. —LAZ

KeizerFEST 2021

Keizer will be dancing in the streets in less than a month.

Plans for KeizerFEST 2021 are underway as the city gears up for its biggest community event of the year, and residents are ready.

Like many cultural events, last year's festival was canceled due to COVID. Now that Oregon is fully opening and all restrictions lifted, KeizerFEST will be where the action is.

The festival is Thursday to Sunday, Aug. 5 to Aug. 8, featuring most of the what we all look forward to: the parade down River Road, on Saturday, Aug. 7, the entertainment tent

filled with music, kids activities, runs and more.

Organized by the Keizer Chamber of Commerce, KeizerFEST 2021 will mark the final year of the leadership of Dave Walery, who has been involved with Keizer festivities for more than 40 years. He and Danielle Bethell, along with new Chamber Executive Director Corri Falardeau, are working to stage an event worthy of a COVID-weary city. —LAZ

K/S senior center set to re-open in July

To the Editor:

Keizer/Salem Area Senior Center, on the corner of Cherry Ave. N.E. and Plymouth Drive in Keizer, is proud and happy to announce that we are reopening our doors this month.

To celebrate, we are holding an open house 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesday, July 20. Join us for cake, coffee and a chance to reconnect with old friends or make new ones.

Letters

Beginning Thursday, July 22, we will be open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Activities and classes will be limited. Check schedule information at www.ksascen.com.

Geordene Lane, Parliamentarian
Keizer/Salem Area Senior Center

We need an effort at civic healing

By MICHAEL GERSON

If we were to judge the health of our republic by the sanity and stability of Fox News hosts, these would be dark times indeed.

After Army Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, recently defended the academic study of critical race theory at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Laura Ingraham vented: "Why is Congress not saying, 'We're not going to give you a penny until all of this is eradicated from the military budget? Nothing.'" She is asserting, in essence, that the military should be defunded if it doesn't share her latest culture-war mania.

It's true that our nation is more than the sum of its ideological grifters and bottom feeders. But Ingraham's remarks are relevant because conservative media has reshaped one of the United States' political parties in its angry, ignorant image.

Significant actors in our political life have lost something important. They no longer care about the integrity of our constitutional process or accept the existence of a shared public reality. They care only about achieving their preferred political outcomes. This was the motivating spirit behind the Jan. 6 Capitol revolt and is the continuing inspiration of former president Donald Trump's big electoral lie: If American systems and institutions don't deliver the results we seek, burn them down.

At 245 years old, the United States has a significant portion of citizens—a majority of those currently identifying with the GOP—who say they believe the legitimately elected U.S. president is illegitimate. They say they believe, against all the evidence, that progressives led the violent assault on the U.S. Capitol. And in states across the country, these right-wing, authoritarian populists are rearranging electoral systems to better dispute and overcome future outcomes that displease them.

This is the main threat to American democracy. It must be confronted. But one sure way to make things worse is to respond in kind. When it comes to the defense of democratic institutions, fighting fire with fire is to join in the arson. Anyone, of any ideological background, who believes that the primary object of politics is to discredit and crush your political enemies is contributing to the crisis. No form of loving your country involves despising half its citizens.

So what is the proper response to the gleeful civic nihilism of our time? Some proposed solutions—such as better civics education, or a year of national service, or institutional reforms such as ranked-choice voting or independent redistricting commissions—tend to sound like naive do-gooderism. It's difficult to imagine programmatic responses to organic decay.



But let me rise in defense of do-gooderism as a defining American characteristic. Our civic crisis of vicious polarization can yield only to efforts at civic healing. Our social crisis of fragmentation and declining social trust can be confronted only by efforts to reknit social ties. Our spiritual crisis of rising depression, addiction and suicide can be opposed only by community institutions that are in the business of meaning.

Civic healing is possible only with a measure of civic idealism. It has worked in the past. Thousands of influential institutions were created in the late 19th century to fight political corruption, advance civil rights, promote democratic character and respond to the suffering and dislocation of urbanization and industrialization. And there are currently thousands of institutions attempting the civic, social and spiritual healing of the United States.

Attempting transformative social change raises two questions. First, how can institutions of renewal find each other and strengthen their mutual work? Second, how can good citizens find these institutions to support with their time and money?

In the run-up to Independence Day, a broad, bipartisan effort had been launched to provide answers. A new Partnership for American Democracy has been created to catalyze a national effort at civic healing. It has been designed as an infrastructure for organizations to share information, encourage innovation, pool resources and coordinate messaging. It will also eventually be a single place for individuals to find their role in this movement.

Participants in the Partnership for American Democracy include organizations that encourage civic literacy, promote community bridge-building, expand youth service opportunities, advocate for political reform, hold media organizations to ethical account, advance respect for shared facts and foster emotional health. All the institutions agree on the need to work across partisan and cultural divides in solving practical social challenges -- and to make such habits of cooperation an expectation of American citizenship.

This is do-gooderism on steroids, which is exactly what our nation requires. We need the social return of love -- love of country and love for our impossible, invaluable neighbors. This may be sentiment, but it is also sanity.

(Washington Post)

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