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2022: Gloomy to bright?

For many people, this past year has significantly outstripped 2020 as *annus horribilis* (a year of disaster or misfortune). Everyone will be forgiven for celebrating the new year with wild abandon (but, celebrate responsibly—don't drink and drive).

Take your pick for what made the past year practically unbearable for you (we don't really need to recap the year, do we?).

The turning of the calendar from one year to the next always fills one with hope and excitement. We ask, "What will the new year bring?" when we should be asking ourselves, "How will I make the new year wonderful?" Our world is what we make it, for ourselves and others. We should face 2022 with a positive attitude and the grit to shape daily life for the best possible outcome.

We all start the new year the same: we are alive, and that ain't nothing. As long as we are breathing there is hope that the new year will shine as bright as a new copper penny. As we always say, the future belongs to those who plan for it.

This is the time of year for resolutions and predictions. Making predictions for a new year is a fool's errand—we make predictions and God laughs.

Keizer is a place that makes sober, calculated plans for the future. Our mayor, Cathy Clark, demonstrates this better than most public officials. As she leads the city, Clark doesn't set unattainable goals but methodically sets

Anna Munson's column was balanced and factual

To the Editor:

Thank you, *Keizertimes*, for publishing Anna Munson's well thought-out, balanced and factual response to Andrea Smith's seemingly "knee-jerk" response to the same meeting (*Meeting about schools misrepresented as an eye-opener*, Dec. 24). I would have responded to Smith's slanted worldview on education here, but I didn't attend.

I realize people drag their worldview with them to public meetings rather than checking them at the door, and Anna is likely no different. However, her 40

Editorial

the table for success for the city and its citizens.

There are others who strive to achieve the levels of success that eludes other locales. McNary High School continues its drive to be a world-class school under the tutelage of principal Erik Jespersen.

The new year will be bright for Keizer because of those who give of their time, talent and money to make own little corner of the world a better place. Keizerites have also been generous, never more so than when someone is troubled or in need.

Here, we face the same challenges faced by people around the nation and the globe: a pandemic that is not yet conquered, economic issues such as inflation (especially at the grocery store) and supply chain issues and attempts to curb personal rights. How we face those challenges will say much about who we are as Keizerites.

By most measures 2021 was a horrible year, but with fortitude, tolerance and forbearance, 2022 can shine bright for us all. Let's turn the page from *annus horribilis* to *annus mirabilis*. It is with-inxv our power to make it so.

—LAZ

Letters

years of history in Salem (as opposed to New Yorker Andrea Smith's seven years) speaks credibility to me even without knowing her healthcare background.

I also trust letter writer Jo Williams discovered further enlightenment from Anna Munson's contribution today. I think we all did.

Bruce Priem
Salem

I have been the target of of hate speech and threats

By ABIGAIL ECKHART

The *Keizertimes* printed a guest column by Andrea Smith (*Meeting about schools was an eye-opener*, Dec. 17) about a local parent group that has been meeting to address concerns with the Salem-Keizer School District. The group *SK We Stand*, is one that I helped form, and I am proud of that. Why are parents gathering to talk about the school district? Here is my recent experience:

In July I called my child's principal to review curriculum. It took me several months, several back-and-forth emails and phone calls. When I was finally allowed to go to the school in October, even then the curriculum was not ready for me. I had to go once again to the district to get the rest of the curriculum. Why does any parent have to jump through hoops simply to know what their kids are being taught?

I attended a board meeting on Aug. 10, and while waiting outside for the doors to open, I became the recipient of hate speech and threats by a student advocate group. I had no idea who this group of students was prior to this meeting. When I emailed the board to address my complaint about racial discrimination, I was met with lame excuses as to why there was nothing anyone could do. I emailed Board Chair Osvaldo Avila and shared with him my background and how my grandfather attended a segregated school as a child and why my son's education was important to me. My complaints went nowhere until I contacted the school lawyer. Suddenly my complaint was taken seriously.

This advocacy group was allowed to racially harass me, scream at me within inches of my face, videotape me and at a prior meeting, photograph my 7-year-old daughter. I have since removed her from public school for her own safety. My informal meeting with the school board chair and superintendent, was frankly an attempt to pacify an angry parent with empty promises and meaningless words. I was accused of being "anti-science," never experiencing racism, silencing BIPOC youth voices and having "white privilege." I have never, nor will I ever, be "white." School board chair Avila, told me and my husband, in front of our children, that I needed to read the book *White Fragility*. He also told me that he would not meet with a parent from our group who "negates his experiences" while he spent the entire two hours negating the experience that I had at a school board

Guest COLUMN

meeting. He saw nothing wrong with a group of students calling another person of color a "white supremacist." He allows this group to dominate meetings, harass and threaten community members and stand outside board meetings with a bat. They have since slandered, and doxed parents and their families on the internet, harass a fellow board member and her children, and simply say his "hands are tied."

So let's talk about the truth about our district. When parents come to speak up and have a say in the education that they pay for, and they are met with gross arrogance and indifference, we should *all* be concerned. Our district leadership is weak, and our kids are paying for it.

In the last several months I have read multiple times that the board is "too stressed" or "too busy and overwhelmed" to give the community data on things like school violence, etc. Parents and other board members have repeatedly asked for help only to be met with "I'm too busy." Maybe members of the board should consider the amount of commitment to our children and evaluate whether they can do the job they signed up for. Why run for an office that you don't have the time for, when it directly impacts our children and their future? They have wasted months of our time discussing racism in our schools while providing *no actual data*.

Once again, I call on them to provide the data to the community so that we can see where we are lacking and how we can change without viciously attacking each other.

The article written by Andrea Smith was not only inaccurate, but downright ignorant. There are massive problems in our district leadership, and *all* parents have every right to not only meet with school board members, but to organize with the purpose of addressing valid concerns. It's a lot easier to come up with the typical "you're a right wing anti-masker" slur when attacking someone you don't agree with, than it is to come up with a factual argument.

(Abigail Eckhart lives in Salem.)

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