

K PUBLIC SQUARE

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Schools make policies without public input

To the Editor:

I am writing in response to an article the *Statesman-Journal* printed on April 14, about the new transgender policies in the Salem-Keizer School District.

As a former Salem/Keizer district teacher, I found the article to be incredibly one-sided. It did not address concerns that parents are voicing across the nation. Who was involved in making these policies? Which staff and community groups had a say? What parents were asked for input? Why were administrators even caught off guard? How will young women be protected in bathrooms? How will the integrity of womens sports be protected? Why do children as young as kindergarten need to be introduced in public school to the topics of gender and sexuality?

Will this be violating parent's religious rights as protected under the first amendment? What about teachers, such as myself, who feel that being forced to teach such a view would go against my sincerely held religious beliefs? The rights of some citizens should not take away the rights of others. These questions must be answered. I can assure you I speak on behalf of many who have the same questions and concerns.

Stephanie Montgomery
Marion County

Support for Tobias Read and Carrick Flynn

To the Editor:

People admire other people, often also finding them likeable. These personal preferences usually happen because other people have led or are leading lives in ways agreeable and highly acceptable to us.

For multiple reasons, especially as a boy and, later, a teenager, I liked the actors Gene Autrey and Jimmy Stewart.

Letters

As I grew into adulthood and took note of Oregon leaders, I admired and preferred the leadership styles of former governors Tom McCall and Robert Straub.

We will soon decide for whom we will vote in the upcoming primary. It is not my advantage to vote for anyone I personally know. So, I only know them by information about them and appearances in advertisements on TV. Of course, I'm not able to say that I like Carrick Flynn for my Oregon U.S. Representative or Tobias Read for my governor because they can skillfully ride a horse or belt out a cowboy song (although those abilities may be possessed by them) but I've concluded regarding both of them that they're the kind of people who in public office, will inspire likeability, trust, confidence, leadership attractiveness and, ultimately, cheering for effective work.

I believe Flynn and Read have the ability to speak up and advocate for those issues and matters which will benefit the people of our state. They appear tough in spirit and strong in motivation like Tom McCall while they both know numbers and how to put a budget together to serve all of us, as Bob Straub was able to accomplish. Further, these two candidates maintain established families, having shown caring and responsibility while their lives overall have demonstrated a dedication to work with integrity.

To vote is important for many reasons, no reason greater now than that of electing persons who will protect and preserve our Constitution, rule by law, freedoms and way of life. Two Democrats, Carrick Flynn and Tobias Read, promise to deliver the best for their constituents. Please join me in voting for them in the May primary.

Gene H. McIntyre
Keizer

A public library for Keizer: Looking at the big picture

By DON BECKMAN

In her *Keizertimes* guest opinion (*It is time to vote on a library*, April 22) former Keizer mayor Lore Christopher weighs in on the Keizer Community Library's current bid to seek public library status and secure American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding for three years to pay for one full-time library director, a half-time assistant, plus some additional operating expenses.

She noted that, unlike 15 years ago when she and Richard Walsh unsuccessfully attempted to get a scaled-down library approved by the Chemeketa Cooperative Regional Library System (CCRLS), CCRLS will no longer put up prohibitively-high requirements for CCRLS membership, and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds are now available.

After three years of funding via ARPA funds, library costs would have to come from local sources. Christopher then goes on to argue passionately that "No new taxes for any reason should be added to our water bills without a vote." She is incensed that two "fees for service" were added to Keizer water bills without a vote, a \$4 per month fee to support Keizer parks, and another \$4 per month fee to support Keizer police. The latter was recently increased by a whopping 25% to \$5 per month. She contends that she is a supporter of public parks and a supporter of the police—but she didn't get to vote on these taxes. She feels that we should not fund expanded library services without taking the issue to the voters.

As much as I respect Lore Christopher for her years of service to our city, I submit that she is 180 degrees off course in this conclusion. I think we need to look at the big picture—what is the role of a public library, and what services does a city "owe" to its citizens. And I think we need to look at what we should expect from our elected representatives, in this case, our mayor and city councilors.

Funding a public library is, in my opinion, a fundamental responsibility of any city, similar to its responsibility for providing schools, roads, and public safety. Keizer should have a library that is adequate to meet the needs of a city of almost 40,000 people. We are the only city of our size that does not have a full-fledged city-supported public library. Personally, I believe that the Keizer Community Library is too modest in its request for three years of operational funding. In my opinion we should use a chunk of the one-time ARPA windfall to finance building a new library building and pay for library operating expenses via fees for service, which would be substantially less than the fees for service for parks and police. We need a local library that is big enough to attract and serve all of our citizens, with sufficient resources (local and CCRLS) to meet their needs. A library should also be a cultural resource for the city, hosting events like lectures, musical performances, author book signings, reading activities for kids, etc. Keizer Community Library volunteers have

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been making the best of an unfortunate situation for years. We need more than a couple of rooms in the Keizer Heritage Center. We need to build a library that we can all be proud of. And we need city funding so we can adequately staff a new library. Volunteers would continue to be the primary work force, but recruited, trained, and coordinated by professional staff.

What should we expect from our mayor and city councilors? I suggest the following: vision, leadership, and courage. Our city government is not a "direct democracy" where citizens vote to decide every issue. Our system is a "representative democracy," where we elect persons to represent us and make decisions on everyday matters for us. Some of our mayors and city councilors have shown remarkable vision, leadership, and courage. Some examples of their successes are the Keizer Civic Center (thank you, Lore Christopher and others), Keizer Rapids Park (thank you, Richard Walsh and others), and, I submit, the securing of additional funding for Keizer city parks and our police department (thank you, Cathy Clark and others). In a representative democracy, the people still have the final say: if the voters don't like a mayor's or councilor's action, they can vote her/him out at the next election. This is where courage comes in. Our leaders need to decide what they stand for. If they truly support better parks, a stronger police department, and a public library with expanded services, they will find ways to pay for them and be willing to run the risk of possibly being voted out of office. Keizer voters are frugal, myself included, but I cannot imagine anyone being voted out of office for approving a couple of dollars a month in a fee for service for library operations.

So I say to Lore Christopher, "Chill." And I say to our mayor and city councilors, "Cowboy up." Three years of ARPA funding for a public library, followed by public funding, is the very least we can do. We should do more.

(Don Beckman lives in Keizer.)

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