

>>> "Kevin Gage" <[gagelaw@comcast.net](mailto:gagelaw@comcast.net)> 4/25/2008 3:45 PM >>>

Hello. I have just heard, perhaps mistakenly, that there is the possibility of closure of the Walker and Olinger pools. I VERY much oppose the closure of these pools. I have three children, one currently involved both in swim team and water polo. Loss of these pools will directly adversely affect not only my children but hundreds of children in the Salem/Keizer school district. Athletics is one primary way to keep children away from negative influences and to keep them involved in positive influences.

Swimming and water polo are sports, perhaps more than any other sports, which are accessible to the not-so-gifted child-athletes. The children who cannot run fast, jump high or even swim well are ALL WELCOME in these sports where there are no "cuts." These sports benefits the gifted athletes as well as the students who are not athletic at all. The non-gifted student athletes are the students who need the boost in self-esteem more than others. I have personally observed introverted, insecure, non-athletic students blossom in amazing ways because of these sports which will be lost if you close these pools. Please do not take away the opportunity for children to benefit from the only sports available to the masses, to the average student and even to the below average student. To put it bluntly, what other sports that provide true vigorous exercise accept, welcome and encourage the overweight, slow, uncoordinated students just as much they accept the athletic stars? None. With a national epidemic of obesity, is this the way the City of Salem will step up to the plate to address the situation?

Will Salem be the only capital city in America without a public pool? Will successful, intelligent people with children want to move to Salem (or want to stay in Salem), a city so pathetic it cannot manage itself well enough to find the resources to fund a public pool? On the national annual scale of city livability, closing these pools might drop Salem about 200 spots. Loss of pools will diminish the desirability of Salem as a location for new business development. Cities much smaller than Salem maintain beautiful pool facilities, the City of Dallas for example.

Loss of these pools affects other Oregon cities and other Oregon children as well because the loss of swim and water polo teams reduces the teams available for competition.

All the other reasons to keep these pools open are so obvious you must have already considered them, and I need not state them here. Please find a way to keep these pools open. I know you will do your best.

Sincerely,  
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