

Successor must confront growing education crisis

Verne Duncan, the state superintendent of public education, steps down from office this week, assuming a new post as the dean of education at the University of Portland.

Duncan, who has held the job for 15 years, has drawn much criticism for the budgetary problems facing the elementary and secondary schools in the state which has caused many schools to fall into the safety net, providing back-up financial relief.

Through it all though, Duncan has done a good job trying to provide the best school system possible for the state's children.

Duncan, if nothing else, cares about students. He spends half of his time going around the state and seeing what can be done to improve education in the state. His push for educational reform and higher graduation requirements came at a time when they were sorely needed.

He will be best remembered for his push to fund schools through the controversial sales tax initiative, trying to get away from funding schools through property taxes. Although the results weren't successful, they were right on track.

The likely successor to Duncan is former secretary of state Norma Paulus who launched a state gubernatorial bid opposite Neil Goldschmidt in 1986. Goldschmidt will appoint someone to take Duncan's post soon, but whoever it is will likely face a challenge from Paulus in the 1990 election.

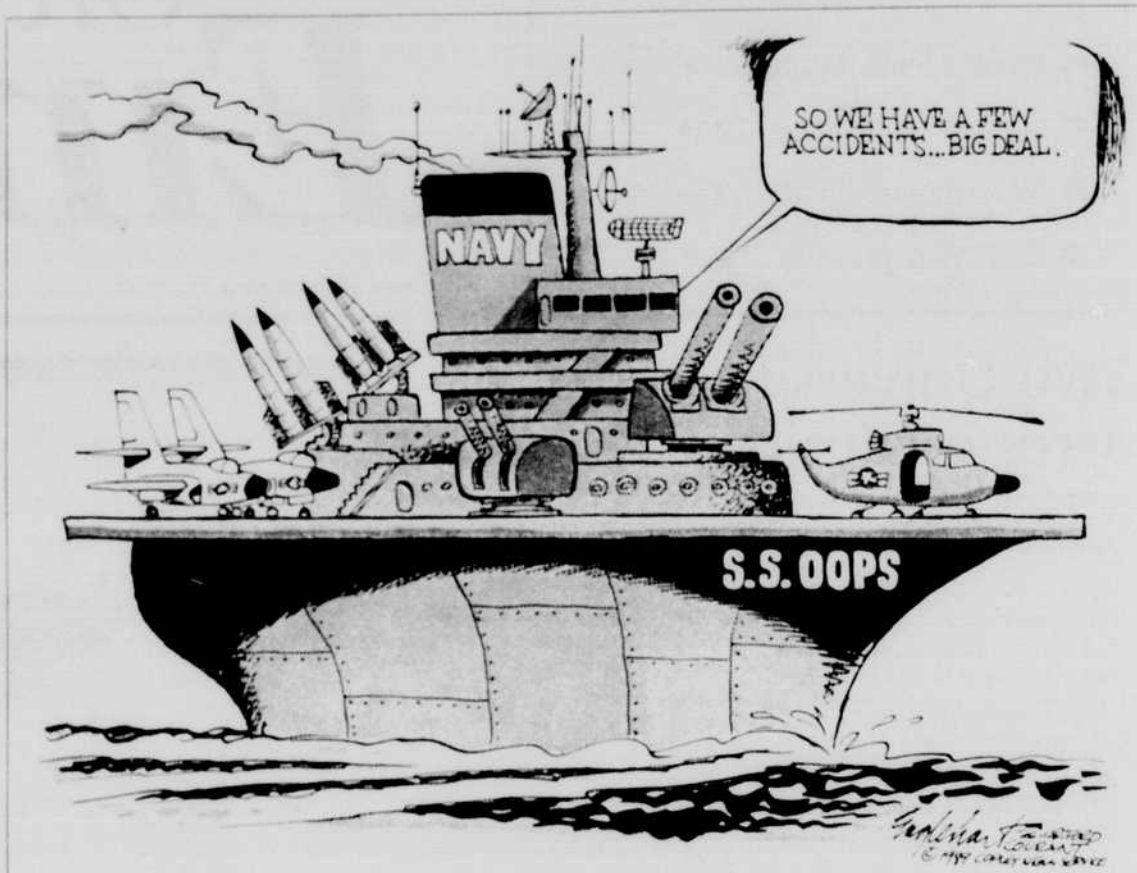
Despite whoever takes over for Duncan, they will face growing problems in education that need to be looked at, dealt with and solved.

The biggest problem, as earlier stated, is financing the public school system. Quality means quantity, and to provide a quality education, the school systems must have the money to spend and develop a child's education.

The school systems also must come up with stricter graduation requirements to make for a better education. Too often the schools are turning out students who cannot master reading a simple book or having the math skills to balance a checkbook.

The growing education crisis that has hit the entire nation is unfortunately alive and well in Oregon. It's not Verne Duncan's fault. He did what he could. The fault lies with the state legislature and the voters. They are the ones who should be held accountable for their actions.

Despite where the fault lies, it is the job of the new state superintendent of public education to do something to solve the worsening education crisis.



Navy becomes more than an adventure

It's not just a job, and it's becoming more deadly than any adventure that any sane person would want to take part in. Cases in point:

- Nov. 1: Three sailors are swept from the deck of the aircraft carrier *Eisenhower*. One dies.
- Nov. 1: A fire on the oiler ship *Monongahela* injures nine crewmen.
- Nov. 9: A Navy jet crashes into an apartment complex in Atlanta. The pilot manages to eject, but two die on the ground.
- Saturday: Navy jets mistakenly bomb a campsite in California. The six campers are uninjured but thoroughly surprised.
- Sunday: The destroyer *Kinkaid* collides with a tanker near Singapore. One sailor dies, four are injured.
- Tuesday: An F-14 fighter jet crashes off Key West, Fla. The crew is rescued, but the fighter sinks and is lost.
- Also Tuesday: A fire on the ship *Inchon* injures 31.

Add to this the 10 killed since Oct. 7, and 47 killed on the battleship *Iowa* when their turret exploded in April, and the Navy looks less like an adventure and more like a bad action flick — literally every day. This prompted the Navy on Tuesday to shut

down normal operations on land and in the air and sea three days, an unprecedented "safety stand down."

Will this accomplish much? Hopefully. But it will no doubt be too much to hope for to expect the Navy to eliminate accidents such as the ones indicated above. In fact, hoping for a major improvement in the accident record would also be unwise.

Although Navy accidents have so far claimed 102 lives, it should be remembered that 67 accidents have happened so far this year, two less than 1988's record low of 69 mishaps, in which 63 fatalities occurred.

The bottom line: accidents happen. Naval training and operations take place in some of the harshest conditions on earth — thousands of feet in the air and under the sea. It is extremely hazardous to operate today's state-of-the-art ships, and to fly advanced fighter aircraft (much less land them on the heaving slab of an aircraft carrier).

While we hope the Navy locks down some of the admittedly befuddling problems that have been plaguing it this year, it is important to remember that the armed forces are not the slick, rock n' roll camping trips they claim to be on their commercials. They're hazardous as hell.

Letters

Once again

Once again, here we are again after nine weeks of agonizing Oregon football. The '89 Ducks have had more ups and downs than the space shuttle.

The Ducks are loaded with some of the best athletes in the Pac-10, including the best set of offensive skill players in the league, and a defense led by Dave Cusano and pre-season All-American Chris Oldham, which is ranked third in the league.

Despite this, the Ducks are 6-4, with three of those losses coming in games in which the Ducks had legitimate opportunities to win. Perhaps the problem is not the players, but the coaching staff.

Now, let us throw some numbers at you: 58-81-4. And that's not today's winning lottery number, it's the win-loss record of coach Rich Brooks, now in his 13th season at Oregon.

Maybe the programs should make some changes in the coaching staff. After all, 13 sea-

sons is ample time for a coach to take talented players and turn them into a winning program (at least 7 or 8 wins in one season). This is something that Coach Brooks has never done at Oregon.

We believe the players, the fans and the University deserve more.

**Tony Robinson
Jason Kremidas
Anthony Parker
Eugene**

Farewell

With the death of Vladimir Horowitz, humanity lost one of its brightest lights. Horowitz and the music he created represented that part of human nature which aspires to things high and beautiful. He was the very expression of a vanishing world.

Whoever created humankind also created a love of beauty in our hearts. This love of beauty has been overmastered by the shadow of fear and greed. One might look at the hatred, the

poverty, the mindless destruction of our planet, and conclude humanity is wretched, and fully deserving of the extinction that threatens.

Yet I listen to Horowitz's music and the pride in my humanity stirs. I am able to stand tall knowing I am part of the same civilization as this great and gentle man. And in his music, I feel the shadow of regret for my people, who in their fear of darkness turn away from beauty and light.

Farewell Vladimir, and bravo.

**Jeff Bernhardt
Law**

Nicer and safer

In response to take a stand (ODE, Nov. 8).

It occurs to not only myself, but also many other students of this University, that the transient problem has been quite prevalent on this campus for quite some time.

However, I think it is very shallow minded for one to

think this problem will simply go away if ignored. Millions of people are homeless in America. I find this abhorrent when this country is the wealthiest nation in the world.

I too am afraid to walk at night by my self because of the abundance of transients and odd balls loitering on campus. However, ignoring the fact that these people are homeless will not solve anything.

Most students that attend this school spend approximately between six and ten thousand dollars a year. One should really be ashamed of themselves if they are above pitying a person less fortunate than themselves when they are fortunate enough to even have come this far.

Why not use your intelligence and education to help those less fortunate than yourself? Why not do something productive? Giving them money is not the answer, you're right, but give them some kind of opportunity to better themselves — after all, they are humans too, and whatever there circumstances may have been that create there unfortunate lifestyle, we should always be thankful for what we have been given, or what we have made ourselves.

It's time to make all of America "a nicer and safer place to be."

**Grace Wilson Jr.
Student**

Letters Policy

Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style.