

Skill Olympics draws student craftspersons

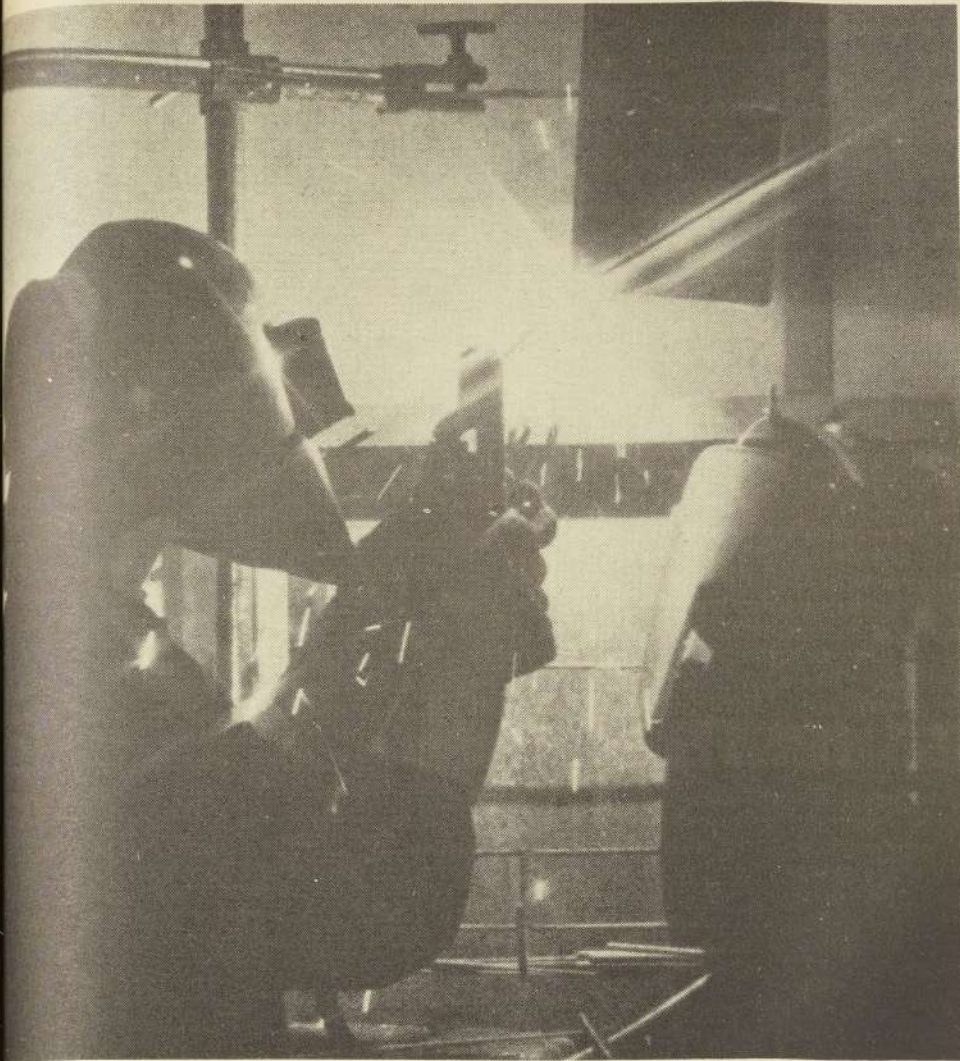


Photo by Lorraine Stratton

This weekend the College was host to over 400 Oregon high school students who were competing in the eighth annual Vocational Industrial Clubs of America (VICA) event and leadership conference. For the College this is the second year in a row that they have helped put on these skill olympics in cooperation with VICA.

VICA is a national organization designed to develop leadership and citizenship while developing the practical skills that are required by much of today's work force.

The skill competitive events are excellent displays of a student's skills in a particular industrial trades ranging from architectural drafting to bricklaying and any kind of machine or electrical trades in between.

There were 26 separate events to be judged in the two-day competition. Local businesses provided the expert judging needed in this kind of competition. Businesses also provided valuable materials, supplies and prizes in the form of scholarships and grants. Many people from the staff at the College generously donated their time to talk with the students and help judge events.

President of the Oregon VICA Jerry Jones, opened the confer-

ence last Friday afternoon introducing the two welcoming speakers, State VICA Director Ralph Little and College President Dr. John Hakanson. Little made a special point of congratulating the College on the "very good job" they did in helping to set up the conference.

In a short opening comment Hakanson stressed the important role that community college could play in the lives of many of the students who may best be able to continue their skill education at a community college.

The college president also pointed out how important it is for students preparing for college to "learn how to learn."

Speaking at the awards ceremony were State Superintendent of Public Instruction Verne Duncan and College Dean of Instruction, Dr. Ronald Kaiser.

Both speakers lavished praise on the achievements of the young people and Duncan particularly emphasized how rewarding it was to see kids living up to their potential.

Local winners and their events were: Architectural Drafting, Jeff Aunt, West Linn H.S.; Small Engines, Jim Larson, Area Vocational School; Welding, Oxy-acetylene, Larry France, O.S. Skill Center; and Carpentry, Scott Herigston, Canby H.S.

Incumbent Duncan visits Skill Olympics

State Superintendent race offers contrast, conflicts

Jim McCaffrey
The Print

This May the voters of Oregon will have a chance to vote for Superintendent of Public Instruction. The Superintendent is the chief executive officer responsible for interpreting and administering Board of Education policies and rules, which are the force of law. Running for the position are incumbent Verne Duncan, Oregon Institute of Technology, history professor and state senator (two time majority leader) Fred Heard, and Hood Community College technology professor Ruth McFarland. If no candidate receives 40 percent of the vote then the candidates receiving the most votes will run in another partisan election in November.

Last Saturday, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, incumbent Verne Duncan was at the College to participate as a guest speaker for the V.I.C.A. Skill Olympics.

Regarding the state high school competency program, Duncan said that he saw little difference with teaching a class with the idea of passing the competency test in mind. He pointed out that the important thing to remember is that at a singular point in time a particular student had the ability to meet the minimum requirements necessary to justify a high school diploma. Duncan declined, however, to be responsible for how long the student is able to retain that knowledge. The superintendent added that there is a need for change, April 19, 1978

some more uniformity in state wide standards of competency but he stressed that local school control must be preserved. It is also considered important to make sure that students aren't cheated by schools that teach to the minimum passing level thus turning the system around from one that rewards maximum effort to one that rewards only minimum efforts.

The educator says that he envisions a better state wide teacher training program and an educational system better equipped to help students pass minimum competency requirements and detect earlier the learning problems so many young students are afflicted with. He plans to do this by setting up a system of check points built into the system where the student would be tested to measure his progress in school.

Switching to another subject, Superintendent Duncan felt that Senator Heard's Urban Education unit is completely unnecessary as the ODE is already set up to handle the problems brought up by Heard. Pointing to the fine job that the Director of Compensatory Education, Jerry Fuller is doing, Duncan claimed that one-fourth of Fuller's time is spent working in Portland schools.

Since a citizens group this week had come out with a report showing that 32 percent of the 7,415 black students in Portland are bussed to school while only 2 percent of the white students are bussed and since this group

has called for improved racial understanding especially in the preparation of predominately white schools for black children. Duncan was asked for some thoughts on Urban busing and the problems it presents in Portland.

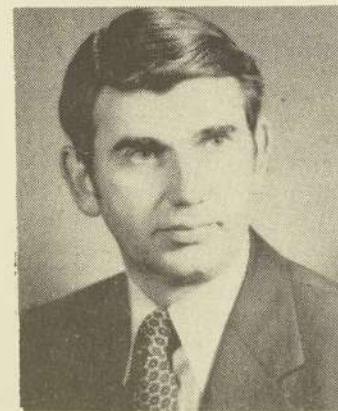
The director responded by pointing to the Beaverton-Oswego busing program as a model system any program would be proud of. Duncan said he felt that the city high school open door policy has lent itself to voluntary forms of integration as students seek to pursue their interests in schools that are particularly strong in a certain field. He cited Jefferson High School as a model of this program, Jefferson having an outstanding performing arts program.

Duncan also talked of the need to stabilize school funding and while he admits that despite all the steps taken to prevent it, a 1976 tax payer rebellion is possible in Oregon again and it could force more schools to close. The Oregon tax levy system is a system that superintendents will have to live with, but Duncan feels that a better public awareness along with millions of dollars in school funds going to offset property taxes will be enough encouragement to voters to vote in future levies.

Before he had to leave for the day Duncan made a point of showing how important the state's community college system was to Portland in obtaining huge new German industrial plants in the Northwest section of town. The superinten-

dent said that because the states community college system could virtually guarantee the skilled labor that the industry requires, Portland had a big advantage over many of its competitors when bidding for the industry.

As he was leaving Duncan was asked about what kind of Superintendent his opponents would make. Duncan said that he would be very interested to see either of his opponents in his office because neither of them has served in an administrative capacity, anywhere, be-



Verne Duncan
...visits college

fore. This would be a handicap that Duncan feels they would not be able to overcome. They would lack the ability to make the proper day to day decisions that have to be made daily at the ODE.

While all three candidates have agreed on some of the issues and problems facing the school systems there has been much dis-

agreement among the candidates and much criticism of Duncan's administration. All candidates stress the importance of maintaining the system of local school control and all agree that the basic school support should be raised from the present 40 percent to 50 percent in an attempt to help stabilize school financing. It should be kept in mind that this election of Superintendent of Public Instruction is the first election since before the 1976 taxpayer rebellion which voted down so many school levies and forced the closure of some Oregon schools.

Ruth McFarland has called for the reform of what she calls the "three T's". The T's to be reformed are textbooks which a recent Oregon State University study showed were often too difficult for the grade level they are aimed at; Teachers, McFarland advocates a more rigorous training program for teachers pointing to the fact that at the fifth grade level a teacher need only have had one course in how to teach reading to be qualified for the Oregon public school system; testing, the third of McFarland's three T's has become one of the big issues of this campaign.

Specifically, McFarland and Senator Heard have both attacked the new Oregon minimum competency requirements for graduation from high school. Both candidates have charged that the program has been mishandled and that the Oregon Department of Education has failed to take a leadership role in putting the idea across in public schools.

