

Fire chief answers charges in letters

Editor's Note: The following is a letter from Sandy Rural Volunteer Fire District chief Bob Rathke. During the past few months, the chief and the fire board have come under fire from several volunteers who have resigned from the district over a dispute with the chief and the board.

Also during recent weeks (including this week's Post) letters have been published in the Post from individuals concerned with the situation in the fire district.

To the Editor:

In regards to Mr. Amacher's letter, there are a number of points that need clarification, especially the suggestion that the Fire Board is going to fast in its planning and spending.

After having worked with this Board for almost a year, I would characterize it as one that is slow to act, requiring a good deal of background information, investigation and time to think, before making any major decisions. An example of this thought process is the recent internal problems with a few of the volunteers and myself.

The Board took 4 months to settle this controversy, bending over backwards to give

everyone a chance to be heard, before reaching a decision. The central dispatch issue is another example. A study of this proposal was started in Sept. of 1972, at the instance of Mr. Amacher and it was not until the Feb. 73 meeting of the Board that it decided, with no opposition, to postpone further action on this proposal for one year, mainly because there is pending, a proposal to have Clackamas County operate a County wide central dispatch system along with the 911 emergency number.

In regards to the bond issue expenditures, this money was approved by the voters at a special election which automatically earmarks it for certain items, among which is new fire apparatus. A committee was appointed in Nov. 72 to draw up specifications for new trucks. Final specifications were completed and mailed out this past week to prospective bidders with a bid opening set for June 26.

As noted by Mr. Amacher, it takes a year to receive delivery pending a successful bid by the manufacturer. These units would be available in late Dec. of this year. If this manufacturer does not submit the

successful bid, the District could very well have to wait until next June, 74, to receive delivery on any new equipment.

Mention is made of a rescue rig. It might be well to note that calls requiring use of a rescue rig, such as first aid, rescues, etc., make up over 60 per cent of the total calls in the District. The present unit is overloaded, (while not having enough room for required equipment) is short on seat space for the required manning and is not suitable for our type of terrain and road conditions. At a meeting of May 15, the Board authorized me to obtain bids on a chassis and box for our rescue service. These bids will probably be awarded at the next regular Board meeting, June 12, and the unit should be in service by Sept. 1.

The Chief's car has 42,000 miles on it and will have 52,000 miles by this same time next year. Present Board plans do not include replacing this unit with funds from the bond issue; however, the Board has planned a careful investment program, in cooperation with the County Treasurer, of bond issue monies. The Chief's car might be replaced with the interest money from these investments before any major repairs are needed on this vehicle.

Mr. Amacher's letter states some contradictions which should be pointed out. Mention is made of the Board giving me a free hand in spending, then he says that the Board approved all large expenditures. Mention is made of new spending proposals such as remodeling GI trucks, which the District obtained through the efforts of the former Chief, Lyle Seaman; then a statement is that the money should be used to improve equipment that is on hand. Reference is made to spending proposals for new tanks and I believe this calls for a look at the problems faced by the Board these past eight months.

At the end of Nov. 72, we were informed by the Insurance Rating Bureau that the regrading of the fire district was being stopped, that the schedule used by them was going to be changed (the first major change in over 15 years), and that we would be regraded in about one year under the new schedule. Although we were told that the schedule was going to be changed, it was not until May 1, 1973, that we were informed of exactly what the new requirements were going to be. The major change for the rural areas is that whereas in the past, a District was judged on the amount of water it could transport over a long period of time; now it is judged on the amount of water that is ready to go in tankers within a specified mileage limit.

Anticipating this change, the Board, at its March meeting, authorized the purchase of a used aluminum tank that will be rebuilt and put on one of the surplus GI rigs or a used truck chassis. The cost of this tank, modifying it and mounting it on a chassis will be less than \$1300. A similar new tank would cost \$3,000. A tank already owned by the District and on a surplus GI rig, has been switched to another surplus GI rig recently acquired by the District. This was done with the help of the volunteers and paid day firemen. We are trying to make arrangements with a local National Guard unit to have the first GI rig repaired. If this can be accomplished, this unit will be rebuilt by our own men and put into service as a Brush Fire Truck. All is being done at a cost of parts only.

Mention is made of borrowing money "Again" to meet current fiscal needs. This is illegal without a vote of the people and has never been done in this District. What may be

Former residents here for visit

Dr. and Mrs. Darrell Courser, now of Jengri, Nigeria, West Africa, and their daughter Connie, are visiting his mother, Ida Reinholdt in Sandy this summer. They arrived in time for the graduation of their son, Randy, from Columbia Academy in Battleground, Wash.

Also attending the graduation is the Courser's daughter, Cheryl, who is taking nurses training at Walla Walla College in Washington.

Dr. Courser is a missionary doctor in charge of the hospital in Jengri. He will attend a medical convention in Colorado later this summer, before returning to Africa in August.

referred to is the fact that this District, like most local government agencies, was forced to borrow money at the beginning of the fiscal year to meet expenses. This is because tax money does not come in (in any appreciable amount) until the end of Nov. Money spent on interest for loans, is later recovered by investing tax monies received from Dec. on, until they are needed.

Mention is made of going back to an all volunteer organization. There are no fire districts in our area and of similar size that have obtained good insurance ratings with only volunteer firemen, and it is doubtful if we could. This is not because of the firefighting capabilities of the paid men, but because they are able to do the required inspections and

maintenance of equipment and buildings that the rating bureau requires. Surely, eliminating the paid personnel would be a step backwards.

I feel the Board has done an outstanding job this past year under very trying conditions, in meeting the emergency needs of the District. I feel the proposed budget is a good one and I hope and urge everyone to vote yes and give the Fire Board the support it deserves.

I am in the fire halls all day and most nights and can be reached by radio at other times. I would be most happy to try and answer questions about the budget or anything else concerning the fire district. If you can't come in, give us a call on the telephone.

Sincerely,
Bob Rathke

Local girl joins Air Force gets PROMIS

Phyllis J. Murray, a recent graduate of Sandy High School will tell you that in the United States Air Force, a promise is a PROMIS.

She will enter the Air Force on July 3, after receiving a written guarantee that she would be trained as a jet engine mechanic. It's part of a new program for putting the right woman in the job she wants, according to Sgt. Bob Lindsay, local Air Force Recruiter in Oregon City.

PROMIS is the air force name for the program, and it means Procurement Management Information System.

To Phyllis Murray, it means that she will be doing the job she wanted just as soon as she completes basic military training and her technical training. Her first stop is at

Lackland Air Force Base, near San Antonio, Tex. for basic training. Then she'll complete 11 weeks of jet engine school at

Chanute Air Force Base, Rantoul, Ill.

Sgt. Lindsay said that the great part about PROMIS is that everybody gets satisfied. The young applicant gets the training he or she wants. The Air Force gets qualified and happy enlistments and both are happy with the recruiter.

"Cradle Roll"

A daughter, Amy Elizabeth, to Mr. and Mrs. Donald B. Rigby, Rt. 1, Box 339, Boring, April 27.

A son, Kevin James, to Mr. and Mrs. James C. Pershall, Rt. 1, Box 566, Boring, April 27.

A son, Michael Scott, to Mr. and Mrs. Norman H. Strand, Rt. 4, Box 2170, Boring, April 30.



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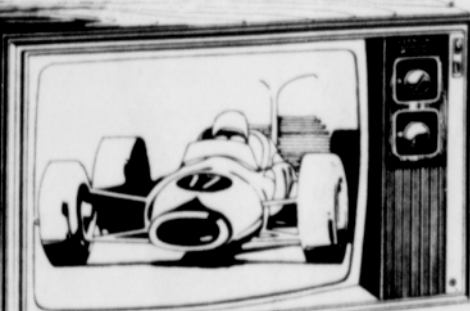
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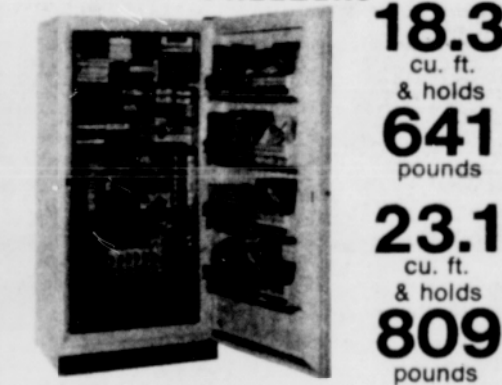
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