

Editorial & Opinion

High school charges rate answers

Sandy High School has come under attack by parents and church members who cite school problems with drinking, drugs, discipline, teacher performance and study habits.

We don't know whether the charges are true or representative, but the allegations themselves are serious enough to warrant a study into the matter.

Some concerned parents apparently have taken their youths out of Sandy High and enrolled them in private schools. Some of those parents with affiliation with Hoodland Lutheran Church and new interest in a Lutheran private school met with Sandy High principal John McMahan earlier this week.

Drinking is widespread, one parent maintained, with bottles in many school lockers.

Drinking and marijuana use are not treated seriously by school officials, with one-day suspensions typical punishment, one parent charged.

The Lutheran parents also cited possible misbehavior by high school instructors, including sexual contact with students and drinking on a class outing.

Drinking has become so prevalent at Sandy High, one parent charged, that some non-drinking students don't participate in school events like dances and games to avoid peer pressure.

The distraught parents were critical of the school's academic level, too, citing scholastic aptitude test scores, low rate of

college after graduation and low marks permitted for athletes.

Put into perspective, these charges come from a smaller number of parents of students and former students. Even if true, their charges only implicate some teachers and condemn some incidents.

The high school has, after all, taken corrective measures under new principal McMahan to deal with drug and drink problems facing most public schools today.

To its credit, the administration has cleaned up Hood Street, banned easy exits at games and dances to drink and sponsored drug seminars. New policies have given students more individualized counseling and reduced absenteeism.

McMahan says the "bad" students represent a small minority and that staff impropriety — while possible — certainly would be in rare incidents.

He encouraged the Lutheran parents to present their charges before the school board for policy decisions and more public input.

"Everyone has got to get involved," McMahan said. "It goes beyond shooting at me. It could be your child, and one day we'll be dealing with you."

We agree with McMahan. Public input is needed here, and the school board might help bring focus on the problems — real or distorted — by appointing a study commission of professionals and parents to investigate the charges. (VB)

Legislator's report:

Energy saving options loom

by WAYNE FAWBUSH
Dist. 56 Representative

A number of important things are happening in Oregon's energy picture.

One of the goals during this legislative session will be to accelerate conservation and alternate energy use by individuals. These are the best sources of new energy or the least amount of money in the shortest amount of time.

By that, I mean that it costs less to conserve energy, and by conserving energy, we free up power for other uses.

Conservation also works in the shortest time frame of all methods of energy production. Weatherizing your home will save you an average of 4,000 kilowatts a year. That's 4,000 kilowatts that can be used by new energy or new homes, and it's an immediate gain.

On the other hand, if you wanted to produce usable energy from a coal or nuclear plant, you'd wait from 5-12 years for the planning and building stages to be completed. These are the basic reasons why people were so interested in conservation and alternative energy sources.

An interesting contradiction has developed down here with our information sources. The Oregon Alternative Energy Commission appointed by Governor Atiyeh reports that we can produce all of our new power needs between now and the year 2000, if we actively promote conservation and alternative energy sources. However, the last Department of Energy forecast differs considerably from that.

It forecasts a shortage by 1990 equal to one large coal plant. Somewhere in between those two projections lies the truth.

During the coming months, it will be important to look for developments in energy programs, because they may affect you directly. The governor's suggested energy program would provide people who choose to weatherize their homes with a flat financial incentive of \$700.

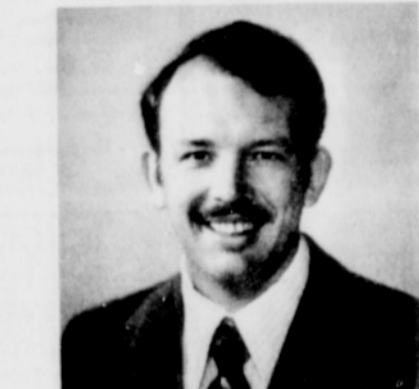
Also, we're probably going to increase the tax savings for investing in alternative energy sources, such as passive solar heating and windmills.

Other suggested bills may affect you directly in other ways.

One bill proposes that electric utilities be

prohibited from hooking up space-heating customers — persons who would heat their new homes with electricity, if natural gas were available.

This is because natural gas is a much more efficient source than electricity. There also has been some discussion about requiring that before a home can be sold that it meet weatherization standards. This is what we call a mandated program, where after a five- or seven-year program you would be required to weatherize your home before you sold it. This is a fairly controversial method.



We know it would produce a great deal of energy, making it possible to delay additional expensive coal plants. But at the same time, we don't know if it's fair to require people to weatherize.

One last thing hanging over everyone's head in the energy field is the effect of the Northwest Power Bill over the energy conservation projects in Oregon.

As you know, Oregon leads the country in moving into conservation and alternative sources. The power bill requires that priority be given to making power available through conservation and alternative sources, and a great deal of money — some \$2 billion — is available to get that type of project started.

These are the issues that face us on the energy picture. If you have any suggestions, questions or concerns, be sure to contact my office.

Use the toll-free number, 1-800-452-7813 and ask for Extension 88794.

Or write me in Room H488, State Capitol, Salem 97310.

Simply check off a dollar on your income tax for the political party of your choice — either one. They both need help. Nothing is added to your tax, and the IRS automatically donates a dollar for you.

Larryann Willis
Oregon's Democratic
National Committeewoman

Letters to the editor:

Check off tax dollars for parties

Our elected representatives have become slaves to big money interest groups who dictate government policy!

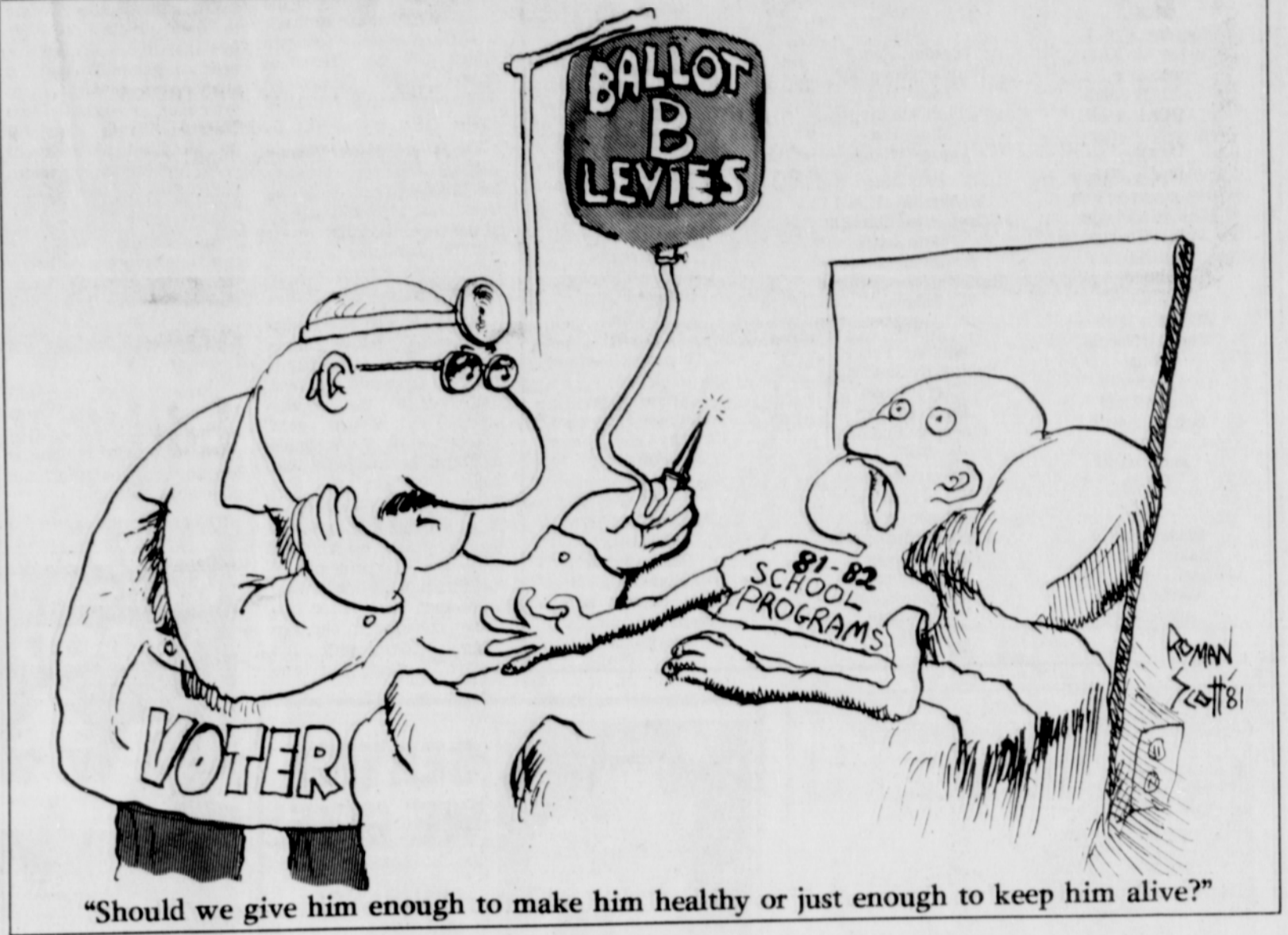
In the last decade the candidates who spent the most almost always won. The bulk of political contributions come from special interest groups and big businesses who can make millions by influencing government

policies. The candidates who are willing to work for them get their financial assistance and usually win the elections.

The dollar check-off was created to help free politicians from dependence on big money contributors who expect favors. It is a chance for the little guy to make a real difference. It does not cost a thing.

Simply check off a dollar on your income tax for the political party of your choice — either one. They both need help. Nothing is added to your tax, and the IRS automatically donates a dollar for you.

Larryann Willis
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Wall Street report:

Even tarnished, gold bright investment

NEW YORK — Andre Sharon makes an odd kind of gold bug.

He says gold is "unquestionably and substantially overvalued on fundamentals" — even after the steep tumble its price has taken in the last year.

He describes the metal as a "sterile" investment, meaning it yields no dividends or interest — and thus carries an unseen "opportunity cost" as compared with other possible uses of your money.

And he suspects gold's price is more likely to decline than increase over the next few months.

Nonetheless, Sharon, who oversees international investments for Drexel Burnham Lambert (and is one of the most respected gold-watchers in the business), thinks you ought to own a little gold right now.

Indeed, he tells me that he remains "more firmly convinced than ever" that "some gold-related exposure legitimately belongs in virtually all well-diversified portfolios, both institutional and individual."

At the root of Sharon's approach is a belief that the primary forces propelling gold prices are political rather than economic or financial, and that these forces — while neither "predictable nor quantifiable" — can be expected, over



by Louis Rukeyser

time, to cause the price to trend upward.

He is scarcely a blind partisan of the metal; in September, he recommended profit-taking in South African mining shares, which had run up sharply, and advised reducing gold investments from 16 percent to 12 percent of one's non-U.S. investments.

Of that portion, two-thirds would be invested directly in bullion and the rest in gold stocks. (Among the South African shares, he totally eliminated all short-life and most intermediate-life mines, favoring such long-life, low-leveraged mines as East Driefontein, Western Deep Level and Vaal Reefs, in the belief that their yields would remain high even at a lower price for gold.)

In his basic economic analysis, Sharon seems to come out as negative on gold as the most virulent bullion-hater. In fact, he regards the metal as overvalued, by traditional standards, at any price above \$300

an ounce. And he thinks the downward pressures will intensify in what he sees as "the current worldwide disinflationary context," as inflation rates tend to lessen around the globe.

Historically, the investment and speculative demand for gold relates not so much to the absolute level of inflation as to changes in the rate in inflation. And while such rates remain unsatisfactorily high, Sharon says, investors perceive a future slackening of inflation in the West generally and in the U.S. particularly.

Such a perception hurts gold two ways: It reduces the psychological fears that lead to buying panics, and it enhances the return available on alternative financial assets. In recent months, U.S. non-gold investors have been earning returns that handsomely beat inflation.

Also working against higher gold prices, Sharon says, are slackening industrial demand (notably for gold jewelry, whose price has become prohibitive for many prospective buyers), less speculation (sales of South Africa's Krugerrand coins dropped by 50 percent in the first half of 1980) and the pressures restraining oil-price increases (an economic slowdown in the West, combined with surplus headaches

for OPEC).

But there's another side to the story, too, and Sharon points to factors he thinks will boost gold in the long run — including diminished supply (he estimates a "steep drop" worldwide), global political worries (notably "the ascendancy of Russian imperialism") and what he regards as "the de-facto remonetization of gold," with individuals and governments around the world accumulating the metal to hedge against currency weaknesses and revolutionary upheaval.

In short, then, while a near-term financial appraisal may not be bullish for gold, Sharon is convinced that the metal's increasing worldwide use as protection against potential chaos suggests the probability of strong demand for it over the longer haul.

By keeping gold investments now to a relatively small proportion of one's holdings, Sharon thinks it's possible to maintain, in effect, an "insurance" policy — while also allowing for the possibility that a U.S. military and economic revival under President Reagan would send the gold price into a more prolonged decline. "In that case," he notes wryly, "presumably the bulk of the portfolio would be performing satisfactorily."

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Salem scene:

Quiet Klamath Falls solon grabs power

by JACK ZIMMERMAN
Associated Oregon Industries

Far from being the most flamboyant member of the Oregon Assembly, Fred Heard nevertheless has attained the pinnacle of legislative power.

The Klamath Falls Democrat was elected Senate president when the current session convened Jan. 12. The transition from an upper chamber ruled for eight years by Jason Boe to a body directed by a relatively unassuming Heard has been less than tranquil.

The new Senate president's reaction to pundits and political detractors however, provides insight for those tracing his rise to political prominence.

Even during the 1979 session, when Heard began laying groundwork for his ascension, he remained unflappable. Though many observers were laying considerable odds some other Democrat would achieve the catbird seat throughout the interim and even after last November's election, Heard pulled it off.

Because he delayed announcing Senate committee chairmen and memberships until after session's start, the new leader steadily rose in the dubious prominence established by speculative news reports.

In fact, whether Fred Heard would indeed become Senate president and what he would do if he achieved that goal were pre-session commentaries ranging close to importance with the

Governor's budget and the attendant faltering economy.

In a chamber dominated traditionally by elders, 40-year-old Heard's attainment has earned him something of a reputation as a legislative upstart. He drew criticism for expanding his staff, increasing the number of Senate committees, changing some of their names, pushing to enlarge Ways & Means and remodeling his former office in the Senate wing rather than moving to quarters occupied by Boe.

How unlikely the sobriquet of parvenu fits the deceptively boyish Heard is perhaps revealed in his response to a member of the Attorney General's staff, who wanted to know why he changed the name of the Senate's Judiciary Committee to Justice Committee.

"Because," he said simply, "I have trouble pronouncing that other word with braces on my teeth."

In a more naturally analytical vein, the Senate president patiently and methodically recites logical reasons for the changes he's made. Dividing Labor, Business and Consumer Affairs Committee into a Labor Committee and a Business and Consumer Affairs Committee makes a lot of sense when one considers the volume of legislative proposals involving all three subjects.

The same reasoning is put forth for establishment of a new panel dealing with insurance, banking and retirement.

It simply means more bills will

receive due consideration during hearings, Heard reasons, and the human nature tendency to concentrate on sexier issues at the expense of drier subjects will be blunted.

All of Heard's reorganizational moves may not be without political considerations. The three-term senator and two-term member of the House of Representatives is a consummate political person.

His parents were Dewey Republicans and encouraged his political interests since his first awareness of the process in grade school. He quite naturally became chairman of an Eisenhower youth group and ran unsuccessfully for Klamath County clerk at the age of 24.

His eventual switch to Democratic registration — a move he maintains has enabled him to operate in a more comfortable philosophical atmosphere — was prompted by disenchantment with Goldwater Republicans.

In 1968 Heard shocked his former GOP compatriots by edging the wealthy veteran lawmaker, George Filtrcraft, out of his House seat by about 200 votes. He was nominated by both parties for re-election two years later and served as minority whip that session in the lower chamber.

As his second House term drew near its conclusion, the descendant of Oregon homesteaders turned educator and politician once more startled the opposition by turning

out of office another highly respected Republican, former Sen. Gordon McKay.

Heard's critics tend to overlook the fact he served as Jason Boe's knee for three sessions as majority leader of the Senate. Quite naturally, his political acumen increased.

Seasoned Salem watchers also point out that announcing committee memberships from the rostrum following the president's election is a Senate tradition, with the exception, perhaps, of Ways & Means.

Further, one need not delve too deeply into Senate journals to learn that chamber for many years had a total of 35 standing committees — one chairmanship apiece for each member and five more left over.

Inheriting the Senate president's traditional octagonal desk may have surprised many observers. It all seems part of a well-conceived plan to the Heard family, including equally astute wife, Adair, 11-year-old Frederick and the seven-year-old twins, Robin and Heather.

When it comes to that issue of adding another member from each chamber to the present seven-person-ways & Means Committee, you have to consider there's an eight-sided desk in Fred Heard's office.

(EDIT NOTE: Jack Zimmerman writes a column for Associated Oregon Industries, a state lobbying group. His opinions do not necessarily reflect those of The Post.)