The Sandy Post

Editorial & Opinion

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SUHS arts center good for town

It's always a shame to see politics and personalities screw up a good plan.

That's almost the situation with Sandy High's planned performing arts center, a multi-purpose community facility in the school's long-range plan.

At a recent school board meeting, center architect Richard Gessford of Portland was questioned for alledged problems with his designs for Welches School. As a result, the board narrowly passed a motion to proceed with this wonderful proposal. The vote was 3-2, with some mountain residents appearing to carry a grudge over problems in Welches.

Concern for excellence and caution with public money is a good thing, of course. But so are plays, concerts, art studios and other things that could benefit the broader community, as well as the school.

This multi-purpose arts center overnight could transform Sandy into a cultural center with a facility other small communities only dream about.

If we can sweep personalities and memories of other places out the window, the performing arts center could be built for $3.3 million. If built six months ago, the price would have been more like $2.1 million. In five years, obviously the price could run much higher.

When viewed as a community-shared facility like the community pool at Sandy Elementary, the center looms as a good investment. The general public would get a much better return for their dollar than most school facilities render.

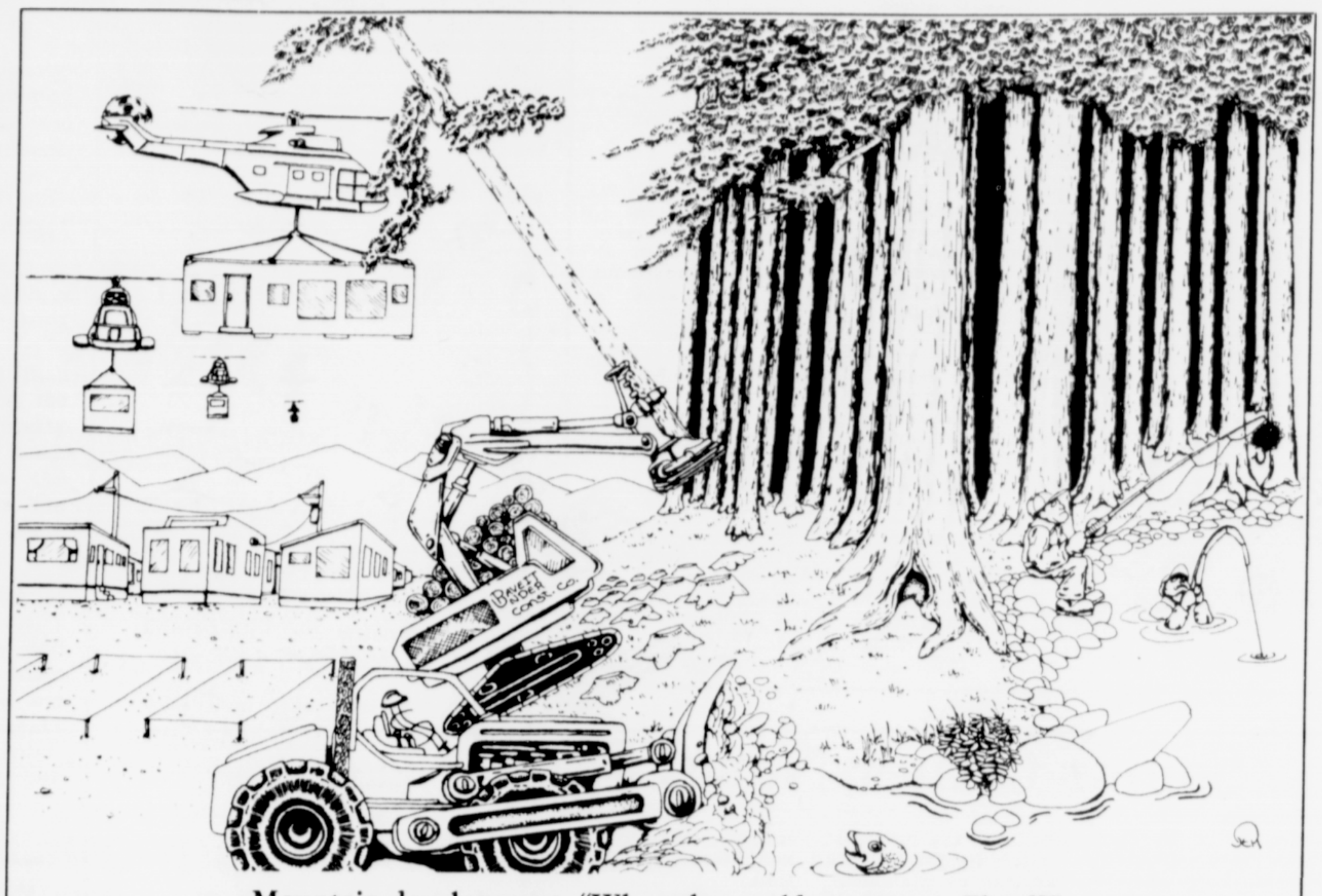
The district proposes to finance the multi-purpose center with a three-year serial levy, the least costly approach.

There's a lot more pay-off than plays and concerts, too, from the center planned on school property on the west side of Bluff Road. Several classrooms from the crowded school would move into the new facility, leaving room behind for existing programs.

Business classes now huddle in the industrial Charles Frazier Building, while the library and science departments need more room. The school's music, art and home economics departments could move to the new center, which also would house a new auditorium.

Another side benefit would be a pedestrian overpass on Bluff Road, something that's needed anyway.

The multi-purpose center sounds like a great place the whole community could enjoy, so let's bury any hatchets from other places and other times. Let's vote on the project now, while the price is low and the need is high. (VB)



Mountain development: "What else could go wrong, Floyd?"

Letter to the editor:

Illegal air strike scorned

On your editorial page last week was a letter that discussed "candidate" Ronald Reagan's cooperation with the air traffic controllers' problems.

But since then, we have seen the kind of cooperation the air controllers have given "President" Reagan. Witness an outlaw strike on their part.

It's obvious what little concern the air controllers had for passenger safety by the illegal strike.

It's difficult for the general public to know what real hazards were present during the initial weeks of the walkout.

Naturally, the FAA would say it's safe; and the union would say it's unsafe. Plus, our "glorious" national media help confuse the issue even further.

But with reduced flight schedules now, the danger should be reduced.

I'm sure the layed-off airline employees have no sympathy for the ATC strikers. And it's almost laughable that the president of the AFL-CIO has implied a fear the government would try to bust his union. His "hot air" in these difficult times is in poor taste.

With an illegal strike and a union boss who has convinced its membership that he is God almighty, it's no wonder public opinion is against them.

Ralph A. Sandercock Jr.
Sandy

The Innocent Bystander:

Prime interest rate needs selling job

by ART HOPPE

At last the cast is back on location and shooting has resumed on that monumental Hollywood epic, "Mr. Reagan Goes to Washington."

As this segment opens, the lovable, innocent hero (played by Ronald Reagan) is down in the dumps. That's The Beautiful Girl Who Loves Him (played by Nancy Davis) who's trying to comfort him at the breakfast table.

Nancy: Gee whillikers, Ronnie, what's wrong? You haven't finished your Ovaltine.

Ronnie: They don't love me.

Nancy: Everybody loves you, you silly—the blue collar workers, the white collar workers, the poor people, the Joint Chiefs of Staff. . .

Ronnie: The rich don't. The hard-hearted bankers don't believe my economic program will work. So they won't lower their interest rates. That's why businessmen won't invest; the stock market's going bust; unemployment's soaring; I can't balance the budget; and propserity won't come around that corner.

Nancy (stamping her foot): Oh, how unfair! Don't worry dear, I'll stand by you.

Ronnie (embracing her) You're swell, Nancy. But what can a mere girl do?

Fade to Stock Exchange. Out front, unemployed brokers are peddling Apple computer stock from pushcarts. Inside, Merrill Lynch is having a Going-Out-Of-Business Sale. Nancy, wearing a tattered old Adolfo, determinedly pushes through a door marked "J.P. Rockefeller—Absolutely Private!"

J.P.: What's the meaning of this, young lady?

Nancy: Why don't you love my Ronnie, Mr. J.P.? He's slashed your taxes, cut welfare funds for the poor, torn up government controls. . . Everything he's done, he's done for you.

J.P.: You're just not my kind of people, that's all.

Nancy: But we're rich, too, J.P. And so are all our friends, the Bloomingdales, the Tuttles, the Darts. . .

J.P.: They're Western rich people, not Eastern rich people.

Nancy: Oh, how can you be so blind, J.P.? A Western million dollars is just as good as an Eastern million dollars. Money's the same the world o'er.

J.P. (thoughtfully): By golly, little girl, I think you're right. (picking up a phone) Lower my prime interest rate from 20 to. . . 19¾!

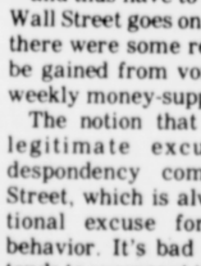
Nancy: Oh, J.P., you're wonderful!

Montage of factories humming, stock brokers dancing and poor folks buying Mercedes. Under an American flag, Ronnie shakes J.P.'s hand as Nancy looks happily on.

J.P.: Don't thank me for saving the country, Ronnie. It was this little girl here who showed me the American way.

Wall Street report:

Bigshots kids in candy store



by Louis Rukeyser

NEW YORK — Don't tell their mothers, but the big shots on Wall Street have been acting like irresponsible kids in a candy store.

They've been overdosing on M&Ms, gumming up the works and, in general, acting like classic all-day suckers.

What's worse, it's not just their own allowances they've been throwing away in their pursuit of (intellectually) empty calories.

The M&Ms on which Wall Street has been chewing so recklessly are the money-supply figures put on display each week by the Federal Reserve Board. Time was when only a few Chicago professors and St. Louis central bankers paid much attention to this product, and they made do with such simple versions as M1 and M2. Now there are nearly enough varieties to rival Baskin-Robbins, and every would-be market commentator from Worcester to Walla Walla is pretending to be a connoisseur.

Such consumption can be dangerous to your wealth. To begin with, nobody on this planet is quite sure right now which M stands for meaningful and which for merely meretricious. This confusion would usually have been just a cause for academic chuckles, but since Oct. 6, 1979, it has been headline stuff for the trendy financial crowd.

On that fall day nearly two years ago, the Fed confessed that it had created a total mess by concentrating on interest rates, and said it would henceforth ply its monetary trade by controlling the nation's money supply in an orderly and predictable fashion. You betcha. Not only did interest rates embark on their well-publicized flight through the ionosphere, but the Fed's topsy-turvy "control" of the money supply would have had to improve several degrees even to qualify as "erratic." And so, unwillingly or unable to control what it had defined, the Fed decided to keep on changing the definition.

So long, we said, to old-reliable M1 — a straightforward measure of cash and checking accounts. Now we had M1A and M1B, not to mention M1B Shift Adjusted, and if the ever burgeoning array was bewildering to the average citizen, that was nothing compared to the befuddlement of the alleged experts, each of whom seemed to seize on a different new definition as the basis for his own — almost invariably faulty — prognostications about the state of the economy.

Never mind that we seem to have entered an emporium offering M&Ms without limit. Never mind that the authorities differ heatedly about which M you ought to be putting your money on. Never mind that each week's Fed display begins with a quiet admission that the figures announced the previous week, and subjected to so many conflicting analyses, were in fact wrong —and thus have to be "adjusted" this week. Wall Street goes on gobbling them down as if there were some real economic nutrition to be gained from voraciously consuming the weekly money-supply figures.

The notion that those figures supply a legitimate excuse for euphoria or despondency comes naturally to Wall Street, which is always searching for a rational excuse for frequently irrational behavior. It's bad enough that the market tends to overreact to a figure that, on a week by week basis, is meaningless. (Serious monetary scholars discount such ephemeral fluctuations — even when they aren't revised seven days later.) To pretend that such overreaction is scientific is sub-adolescent.) Yet each week, like children with no memory, high-priced financial types race to play the same game again.

Even sillier, if that is conceivable, is the prevailing Wall Street tendency to react hysterically to the most predictable of monetary pronouncements (like Fed Chairman Paul Volcker allowing that his policy still seems sound to him.) Such declarations are about as surprising as the sunrise, but they do tend to get the kids excited on Wall Street.

The economic future of this nation depends on a lot of things, from a rebirth of private productivity to a more genuine clampdown on government spending. It does not, however, depend on one week's faulty money-supply figures, and it's time Wall Street digested at least that much food for thought — and cut down on the cotton candy.

Personal observation:

It's glamourous, but is it news?

by Scott Newton

Take the worst of television and assimilate it into your local newspaper and what would you have?

A personal observation column, complete with the columnist's picture.

Unemployment is at 10 percent, but here at The Post all we've got to do is sit around and be funny.

Of course, that's not really how it is. Most of the newspaper people I know more than earn their pay. But still, in recent weeks you've read about Von Braschler's mule-headed Maverick, and about Dan Dillon's "Confessions of a Non-native Duck."

I mean a newspapers, of all businesses, should be conscious of its image, right?

So let's assume I make a mistake on a story, which has happened and will continue to happen. It's the nature of the job.

So the coach, let's say, gets to school on Thursday, opens up the newspaper, and reads in the headline that his team lost 6-300, when in fact they won, 6-3.

Well, never mind that I made the mistake in the headline because I had 101 other things to do.

Just imagine this same coach turning the page, only to see my smiling face, pasted up beside an exciting story about a '68 Ford Fairlane I used to drive.

You're right, he'd think I'm nuts.

And then again, maybe I'm too serious about this column writing. Maybe I should just loosen up. Why should I try to hide the fact that I'm a little bit off upstairs.

Seriously though, I'd prefer to use the time it'll take to write this column every third week to get a little cleaning done in the darkroom. After all, I'm qualified to do that.

There's nothing a 26-year-old can say on an almost monthly basis that's going to do to much for our more worldly readers.

But, with that little bit of extra time I could double-check a fact in one of our stories. I could take time to think of a more appropriate headline. I could re-print a picture, getting it just right, instead of just good enough.

With that little bit of time I might be able to talk to one more coach, or find one more person to comment, or find one more misspelled name or word in a story.

With that little bit of time I might be able to add a little polish to that last-minute story.

But, a lot of whining hasn't gotten me out of the responsibility. So, I'm going to ask you, the public, to help.

Call Von Braschler at 668-5548 and tell him to Free Scott Newton. Do it right now, while you're thinking about it.

Tell him you couldn't care less about seeing his employees' pictures in the newspaper. Tell him you'd rather read about the cross country team, or about a shouting match at a board meeting, or even about some little ol' lady that grows world record-sized tomatoes.

Someday, I wouldn't mind being a columnist. I just don't feel ready. I think a columnist should either be a seasoned veteran, or exceptionally talented.

I just want to be a good reporter.

That's why I don't want my picture pasted up on the editorial page. When you paste someone's picture up, and take up space with their personal comments, you're giving them star status, making them seem more important than they are.

It is important how a writer puts things. But, I think there are a lot of people in this business that are caught up in their own self-importance.

There are a lot of people out there making tough decisions. Journalists make some tough ones sometimes, often in a hurry. But then, who hasn't made a few tough decisions under pressure.

The kinds of decisions journalists make are seldom earth-shattering.

All I want is to be free to gather the news, and to be able to use the time I've got to get it in the most readable form possible.

So if you agree with me, tell Von the next time he stops by to pick up an advertisment. Or call him, or write a letter to the editor

Otherwise, you're stuck with my mug shot and I. And, eventually things will go from bad to worse. When I really get low on ideas, when I really get desperate for a topic, I know I'll end up writing about jogging.

Nobody wants that, right?