

Parent urges recall of Welches School board

by MICHAEL P. JONES
Post Correspondent

Bruce Traas Dahl of Brightwood is urging voters in the Mt. Hood area to consider recall of the Welches board of directors. A father of three children who attend Welches,

Traas Dahl said he is "mad as hell" at the board for "not properly representing the community." Traas Dahl, who was certified in California to teach spanish and auto shop in secondary schools, said he is basing his conclusions on the actions of the board,

especially this year. He said the board's refusal to answer direct questions from the audience at its November meeting demonstrates that there is a problem. He said they either "sidestepped" the people's questions, were "extremely evasive," or

hid behind the executive session clause. The December meeting, he said, was an improvement in respect to the board's willingness to converse with the parents. He said, however, he feels it was an improvement "because they could afford

it." The board's goals "had superseded our desires in respect to the issues and the unanswered questions discussed Nov. 11. "Let's face it, we're being double-shuffled by the school board," said Traas Dahl. "The board isn't about to listen to, understand or represent the parents in this community."

Traas Dahl said at the November meeting questions concerning the denial of the special-duty contracts for Tom Well and Jeanine Boldt, as well as for the shuffle of the fifth-grade students and a teacher, resulted in the board's responses being "particularly offensive." He said their "lack of attentiveness" made those present at that meeting "extremely upset."

Traas Dahl said he was also perturbed with Dick Hoffman, board chairperson. He said Hoffman has no desire to mediate a compromise solution to the problem caused by dividing the first grade into two separate classes with the consolidation of the fifth grade into one large class. "The way he did it disturbed me the most," said Traas Dahl. The parents were in attendance to discuss the proposed changes for the first and fifth grades, but Hoffman would not discuss it. He claimed the decisions were administrative ones made by Welches Superintendent Kenneth Blackburn, and he and the rest of the board

"upheld" those decisions. Hoffman, said Traas Dahl, said that he could not speak for Blackburn, who was not in attendance at the meeting that night. He was attending special National Guard maneuvers at Fort Lewis, Wash. Since Blackburn was unavailable, Traas Dahl said the parents wanted "a one week's stay of execution" so they could meet with him as a group. But neither the board nor Gary Dietrich, Welches building principal, was willing to override Blackburn's decisions.

"I was disappointed in Hoffman's performance as the chairperson of the board," said Traas Dahl. "I believe now that Hoffman is just another politician who is not adverse to 'goobering-up' his fastballs."

Traas Dahl said he feels that "it's unfortunate that most parents now hope that their children survive the fifth grade, as opposed to (thriving in) the flourishing learning environment that we once had prior to the consolidation." He said this "better-than-expected" learning situation was primarily the product of Kathleen McDugal.

"It was one of the slimmest fastballs that has ever been run by a group of parents," said Traas Dahl of the board's vote to approve the consolidation. Traas Dahl said he and a number of other parents

have met with Blackburn since the November board meeting, and most were not satisfied with the answers they came away with. He said that Blackburn cited "fiscal responsibility" as the reason for the first and fifth grade changes, and claimed that he could not justify spending the \$25,000 that it would cost to employ another teacher for the first grade.

In actuality, said Traas Dahl, they had budgeted for 20 full-time and one part-time teacher for the 1982-83 school year, but hired 19 full time and one part time.

"My child came up short," said Traas Dahl. "That's the net result. The reason my child came up short is that she was denied her teacher (McDugal), who she strongly identified with."

Traas Dahl said he estimates 70 percent of the parents of students in the fifth grade oppose Blackburn's consolidation plan and demonstrated this by signing a petition against the superintendent's plans. He estimated another 10 percent showed up at the meeting and voiced their disapproval.

He said he personally is still unsatisfied after his conferences with Blackburn, where three promises were made to him orally. Traas Dahl restated what he said Blackburn promised would happen in order to

provide a good education for the fifth graders. He said Blackburn would "pressure" teachers to insure student achievement; that he would find quality aide-time to assist the fifth-grade class; and that he would personally take an interest and oversee the progress of the fifth-grade class.

At the December board meeting, Blackburn denied that he used the word "pressure."

Traas Dahl said it is apparent that the board has made a mistake in the case of Well and Boldt. "It's the teachers who pull the wrench," said Traas Dahl. "It's the teachers who set the final torque."

How serious is Traas Dahl's proposed recall effort? Traas Dahl said it's very serious. But Traas Dahl said what will stop the recall is the apathy that exists in the community.

"People are fearful of making waves because they feel those on the school board have a lot of power in this community," said Traas Dahl.

Traas Dahl said the people must examine the actions of the board and "insure that everything has been upfront and above board." He said he believes a close inspection of the workings of the board would reveal that there has been many questionable decisions not made in the best interest of the children of this district.

Committee member needed

The Welches School District has an opening on its budget committee.

The position has been vacant since last June, when the three-year term of Verla Rodgers ended. Since that time the position has been unfilled.

At the December meeting of the board of directors, Leah Behan of Rhododendron, a former board member, was nominated to fill the position, but that move was objected to.

At the November

meeting, those persons who submitted their names to fill the vacancy on the board of directors, but were not chosen, were told that they would be contacted to see if they would be interested in the vacancy on the budget committee. According to Judy Donaldson of Brightwood, no such contact occurred.

Bob Meiser of Zig Zag reminded the board at the December meeting of one of their own policies dealing with the filling of vacant positions. The position

has to be made available to the public at an open meeting.

Dick Hoffman, board chairperson, said he had forgotten that the position had not been made available to the unsuccessful candidates for the board seat and said the board would be in touch soon.

Late Monday afternoon, Hoffman said any voter interested in serving on the budget committee, whose name the board doesn't already have on file, should

submit a letter stating why they wish to serve.

The vacancy on the budget committee will be filled at the next board meeting, scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 13 at 7:30 p.m. in the library of the new wing.

The budget committee will meet tonight at 7 p.m. in the library of the upper-grade building. This will be the third work session scheduled by the committee. Parents, teachers and citizens are invited to attend.

Board, WEA discussion set

The Welches board of directors and the Welches Education Association will be meeting in the near future to discuss the differences and hostilities that have dominated the school year.

In a letter to the board dated Dec. 9 Jeanine C.

Boldt, WEA president, officially requested the meeting. The letter was signed by all the school's 19 full-time and one part-time

teacher. "In the best interest of the students of Welches School, the Welches Education Association requests the speedy resolution of the present hostilities generated by the lack of Board communication with parents and teachers," wrote Boldt.

Boldt requested that a special board meeting be held with the teachers and the members of the board in the hope of re-establishing the lines of communication that had been severed during a contract dispute that began last school year. After nine months of negotiations, a compromised contract was approved by the board and the WEA in September.

However, tensions increased later when Boldt and Tom Well, the WEA's two chief negotiators, were denied extra duty contracts by the board. The board members said they would not give Boldt the after-school drama program and Well, the head basketball coach's position, claiming that they had violated previous contracts.

Both Boldt and Well deny they violated any contracts. The meeting is scheduled for Jan. 13 at 6:30 p.m. and will be held in executive session. No administrator will be present so the teachers will reportedly be able to speak freely.

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Russell to compete in Junior Miss Finals

Mary Russell will represent Sandy in the 1983 Oregon Junior Miss Finals, to be held in Eugene on Jan. 22.

Russell, a senior at Sandy Union High School, is the daughter of Jeff and Jan Jaqua of Sandy.

Russell will be competing for a \$300 scholarship award.

"Only 21 high school senior girls in the Oregon Finals are eligible for this award," said Debbie Gassaway, chairman of the Oregon Junior Miss Committee.

"Each contestant will create her own personal hair and makeup style suitable to her hair and the shape of her face. In addition, she will define her perception of individual style and explain how it expresses her self perception."

In addition to the cash award, the winner will receive a Revlon gift kit.

A similar national-level competition for the Revlon personal style award will be conducted for the young women competing in the America's Junior Miss National Finals in Mobile, Ala., in June.

The America's Junior Miss Program will award approximately \$2.5 million in

scholarships and prizes at local, state and national levels in 1983.



Mary Russell

Road by school closed

A concern for safety resulted in the closure Jan. 5 of the road that runs between the upper-grade building and the new addition of Welches Grade School.

The decision to close the road was made by Kenneth Blackburn, superintendent. On at least two occasions the district's board of

directors refused to approve of fencing along the road. Playgro... monitors were to be made more aware of potential problems.

Since last school year the Welches Parent-Teacher Association has been critical of the decision not to install a fence.

In a letter sent home to parents on Tuesday, Blackburn wrote that until a fence is installed the road will be closed to all motor vehicle traffic. School buses and other vehicles will enter the new addition from Woodsey Way. Those going to the upper-grade building will use Salmon River Road.

Herb Society to meet

The Boring Herb Society will hold its first organizational meeting at 10 a.m. on Jan. 10 at the Boring United Methodist Church, which is on the corner of Church and Richey Roads, three blocks south of Highway 212.

Day care center opens

A weekend day care center opened New Year's weekend at the Rippling River Resort in Welches.

Debera McGirr, owner of the Mountain Sun Day Care

Center Inc., said that area residents, as well as skiers and other outdoor enthusiasts, are invited to take advantage of the service.

"To me, it's not babysitting," McGirr said. "It's a structured day of activity."

Art projects, books, building blocks and a "dramatic play area,"

which includes a play stove and sink, are among the activities offered.

Lunch is not provided, but snacks are. Parents should provide baby's formula or a sack lunch, McGirr advised.

The hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. Parents may just drop in, but McGirr suggests making reservations.

The cost is \$14.50 for youngsters six weeks old to 30 months. Children over two-and-a-half years old to 6 years may stay for \$12.50 a day.

A "prepaid advance reservation," which may be mailed in or paid in person in advance, is \$13 or \$11.

There is also an hourly rate, with a five-hour minimum.

The mailing address is Rippling River Resort, 68010 E. Fairway Ave., Welches, Ore., 97067.

The Portland number is 224-7158, and the mountain number is 622-3101.

McGirr has worked the last four years as a teacher's aid. She has a handicapped specialists certificate from Portland Community College.

PTA to discuss safety

The Welches Parent-Teachers Association will meet Tuesday, Jan. 11, in the library of the upper-grade building at Welches Grade School.

On the agenda is a discussion of safety at Welches, especially as it pertains to the potential dangers of students chasing balls into the street,

and not watching out for traffic.

Since last school year, the PTA had been unsuccessful in getting a fence installed on the northern edge of the playground, between the basketball court and the street.

In addition Cathy McKenzie will lead a

discussion on "Cultural Days," planned for the spring at Welches.

Nancy Wolf, movie chairperson, will discuss a movie tentatively scheduled for Jan. 28.

The meeting is scheduled to start at 7 p.m. For further information contact Judy Donaldson at 622-3292.

Board's attorney resigns

The Welches School District is in need of an attorney following the acceptance of the resignation of Lowell Njust at the board of director's December meeting.

Njust submitted his resignation prior to the

November meeting when he learned his wife, Sharon, was applying for the vacant position on the board.

When the board did not select his wife they tabled taking any action on his resignation until the

December meeting.

Prior to that meeting Dick Hoffman, board chairperson, contacted Njust and requested, on behalf of the board, that he consider remaining as the board's legal counsel. Njust refused.

Hoffman said Kenneth Blackburn, superintendent, is in the process of locating a qualified attorney in the Sandy-Mt. Hood area.

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