

The Sandy Post

Editorial & Opinion

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State can take cuts

When Senator Steve Starkovich, D-Dist. 14, voted against putting a sales tax on the ballot recently, he was criticized for not allowing the public an opportunity to at least vote on the issue.

Starkovich and other members defeated the House-supported sales tax bill 17-13 in the Senate.

Starkovich told The Post last week he voted no, despite much pressure to do the opposite, because of another plan he and Rep. Chuck Bennett, D-Dist. 38, conceived "over a cheeseburger."

Instead of a sales tax that he didn't expect to pass (in addition to perhaps another \$9,000-a-day special session in the spring), he proposed a "split menu," which would allow voters the option of a sales tax for property tax relief, or, at a later date, an income tax increase for property tax relief.

The split or staggered menu, with a vote on the sales tax in March, 1984 and the income tax in May, would have allowed voters to decide the issue, which is: Do people want new taxes to support property tax relief?

Had Starkovich voted to put the sales tax before the public in the senate recently the issue debated would have been the sales tax, not property tax relief.

The split menu approach, which varied from the earlier discussed menu approach (where both

forms of relief would have been decided upon at one time), died in the House Saturday.

As Starkovich said, the property tax relief issue presents a "funny kind of situation." The state doesn't raise the money, nor does the state spend it.

The justification for property tax relief is that it is not a regressive tax. Unlike the income tax, the property tax isn't necessarily related to one's ability to pay.

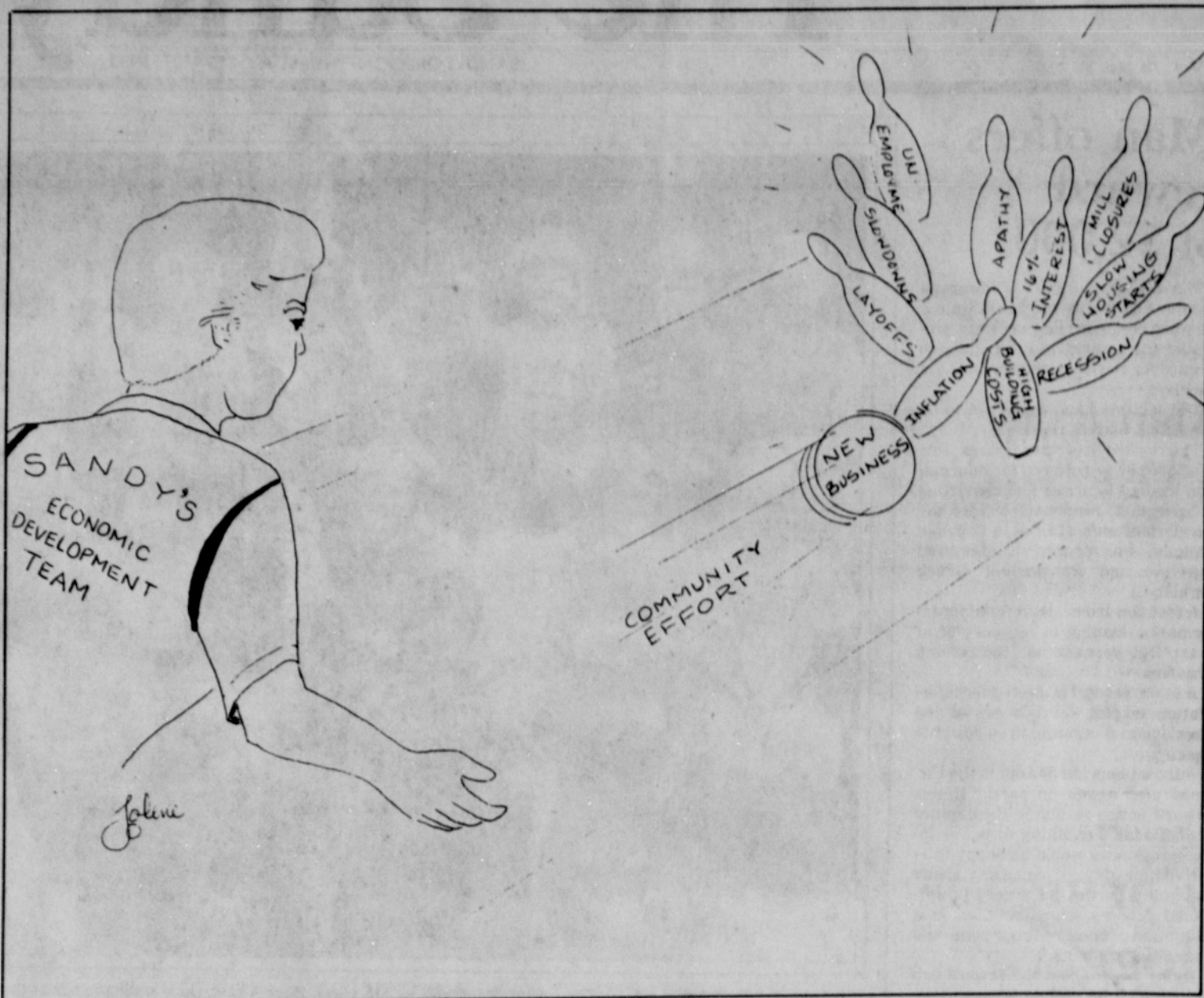
Should the Legislature fail to take action in the '83-85 biennium, some action on school finances and money for economic development might come in 1985.

One area where Starkovich is wrong is in his contention that the state government couldn't be cut back in order to provide some property tax relief.

If state spending could be reduced, he contends, it could be expected that that leadership would come from one "conservative, Republican, businessman Governor."

"I think we've really made all the program cuts we can," Starkovich said.

District 14's freshman senator, despite having had a good idea on the split menu, should reconsider on the issue of reducing the size of the state government. Either that, or Ray Phillips' "Son of 3" will.



Educational ideas abound

"Excuse me, young man, but why are you attempting to read that copy of Playboy upside-down?"

"Read?"

"Oh, sorry. I take it, then, that you are a product of our nation's public education system?"

"Yeah, I guess so. I'm a senior at Millard Fillmore High."

"That's a shame. I was just reading (no offense) in my newspaper that a prestigious commission appointed by the U.S. Department of Education is ready to write off the entire system."

"Write?"

"Yes, that too. They say that 'a rising tide of mediocrity' in public education is threatening to destroy our way of life."

"Just what I was saying to the guys down at the Darth Vader Video Arcade."

"But the commission has a solution. What would you say to longer school days and more homework?"

"Yuck."

"Don't worry. Our president, Mr. Reagan, also has another solution to the problem."

"Shorter days and less homework?"

"No, in order to help you learn to read and write, he's trying to abolish the U.S. Department of Education."

"Yeah, that sounds good, too."

"He wants to get the government off your back."

"Hey, you wouldn't believe how tough it is to read and write with a government on your back. What's stopping him?"

"It's not easy. Secretary of Education T.H. Bell has been working on dismantling the department for two years. Last year he asked for a \$10 billion budget and Congress gave him \$15 billion. This year he asked for and upped his request to \$13.4 billion. They'll probably give him 20."

"They can't teach me to read and write by throwing money at me."

"Exactly. So poor Mr. Bell has to wander through his department crying, 'Work slower! More coffee breaks!'"

you know those bureaucrats; once they get started there's no stopping them."

"Does that mean I'll never get to learn how to read and write?"

"Take heart, young man. Abolishing the Department of Education to improve your system?"

"Yeah, I guess so. I'm a senior at Millard Fillmore High."

"That's a shame. I was just reading (no offense) in my newspaper that a prestigious commission appointed by the U.S. Department of Education is ready to write off the entire system."

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"Exactly. So poor Mr. Bell has to wander through his department crying, 'Work slower! More coffee breaks!'"

"I'm thinking of not going to college."

"Failing grades?"

"No, a failing hook shot. It's just not dropping in lately."

"Don't give up hope, young man. There's still more to the president's plan to save our foundering educational system. He says he's also going to restore prayers in our schools."

"That'll help me learn to read and write?"

"It couldn't hurt."

"Okay, the president can count on me. And I know I speak for all the guys down at the Darth Vader Video Arcade."

"Then you agree that abolishing the Department of Education, creating tax breaks for the well-to-do and praying in class will teach you to read and write?"

"Well, it sure beats more homework."

Art Hoppe is a syndicated columnist.

Letters to the editor

Columnist clawed concerning cats

I did not appreciate the article on cats by Hank Emrich in your Sept. 22 issue.

He obviously has never lived in the country where, if you don't own a cat, your house can become taken over by the "defenseless" mice he refers to. Wood rats and chipmunks also try to move in for the winter.

I have two outdoor cats and they are much easier to take care of than my dog. They only eat about a cup of food a day and I have not had one rodent in my house in the year and a half that I've had them.

One more thing. The damage that can be done to your house by a wood rat or a chipmunk is unbelievable!

Rats have been known to chew holes right through floors to get in (with mice following closely behind them). And once they are in, you can't imagine the amount of food they can destroy in one short evening.

No, they don't eat that much, but rodents are filthy and disease-ridden so anything they come in contact with must be thrown out.

A good cat will protect your home from this sort of invasion and I, for one, speak out in their defense.

If Mr. Emrich prefers rodents to cats, fine, but I do not think he did much research in this area. I suggest he do more the next time he decides to write such a derogatory column. Or at least tell both sides.

Sheri Emerson
Cherryville

Concerned

I was shocked to learn recently that my son was failing some classes at Sandy High School. It is not easy to get this information from your children so you depend on the school to provide it. Too often, however, only when report cards are issued does a parent realize that there is a serious academic problem.

There is an immediate need to establish a "student progress report" system informing parents when their children are doing poorly in school. If a teacher, student or volunteer would call parents of students who need help, on a three week basis, parents would great-

ly appreciate this information.

The high school has made some praiseworthy changes this 1983-84 school year, but they would do a tremendous service by aiding parents such as myself by keeping us informed of our children's academic progress.

Elaine Bowers
Sandy

Vortex?

I congratulate Sandy on its new McDonalds.

As a long time commuter through Sandy I have watched it rise. One thought puzzles me.

Has the east front corner settled, or have we discovered a new Oregon "vortex?"

Don Hanson
Welches

UNICEF

The Baha'is of Sandy want to urge local residents to celebrate Universal Children's Day on Sunday, Oct. 2. This special day, sponsored by the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF), is observed by 150 countries around the world.

The 1983 UNICEF report of "The State of the World's Children" emphasizes child nutrition. It describes the seriousness of malnutrition and also provides extremely practical and hopeful methods of attacking and conquering this world-wide tragedy.

What can you do personally? You can show special kindness and friendship to needy, handicapped or lonely children in your neighborhood, or in your children's school. You can study the problems of children in your community; you can let government authorities know what you want done about these problems. You can volunteer your services to a child care organization. You can get together with other people in your church or synagogue or community center to produce educational programs or fund-raising events on behalf of child care organizations. And you can send a contribution to UNICEF or another international organization which works to help children who need help.

Bev Henderson
Lake Grove

Cuts drastic

I believe nearly every taxpayer in Clackamas County is aware of the present lack of funds to carry on all services in the recent traditional manner. In an attempt to balance the budget, all services have received drastic cuts, including those mandated by state law. This is the case for the county surveyor. His mandated services require a competent staff in addition to the elected position, county surveyor. He must be an Oregon citizen and an Oregon registered

"If children held hands around the world there would be peace on earth"

— Albert Picot.

Bill Knight-Weiler
Sandy

Shocked

The news regarding Clackamas County's administration gets more shocking every day!

Of great concern is that it appears the county commission is not supporting the county surveyor from a recall attempt. Perhaps the recall should be directed at those responsible for creating the problem. After all, the drastic reduction of the surveyor's staff, which has made his office inoperative, was a direct result of the unbalanced, disruptive budget cuts by the commissioners. Are Clackamas County Commissioners allowing others to take the blame for problems they initiated? It appears there is much political gerrymandering going on in our county.

Another shocking and questionable issue is that at least one of the commissioners has taken on outside work. Clackamas County Commissioners are paid \$43,320 a year to be full-time, 24-hour commissioners. Yet with this generous salary, Commissioner Harlan represented private business, moonlighting, before local jurisdictions.

How long can the taxpayers afford such practices to continue?

The newspapers will render a great public service by researching and reporting these clouded Clackamas County issues.

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land surveyor, which is intended to assure his competency.

Unlike many county services, which are intended to distribute funds, or perform services for charity, or to provide for things we could use or would be nice to have, the county surveyor is mandated by Oregon Statute to provide the control and safekeeping of all private land records (plats) (originals) in the county; including the preservation and replacement of all legal section corners from which other surveyors work. This preservation work is now in a 200-year basis. Any citizen, engineering firm, business or consultant can make reference to these records and receive advice from the county surveyor, if the office is adequately operational. The county surveyor checks certain plats, surveys and subdivisions for accuracy prior to his formal approval. They are then available for other county offices, the courts, planning and permit approval. Until this is done, the transfer of land is at risk, contracts to construct are at risk, loans are at risk, high interest is being paid with nothing happening and people who wish to sell material or labor may be delayed. People actually may be out of work and on relief because of this.

To help the county get back on its feet, provide income and taxes, this is certainly one office that should be funded adequately and functioning. If this cutback keeps up long enough, knowledge that Clackamas County can't help get new projects started could cause outsiders to take their business elsewhere and people to leave town. An attempt to be fair in distributing cutbacks could end up in unfairly penalizing all.

Private surveyors, real estate operators, title firms, banks, developers, courts, etc., use this office as a central reference point. According to state law, now, all mandated functions of the county surveyor are to be accurate and as current as possible.

The county surveyor office is paid by receipt of some fees and other funds from the county general fund at the authorization of the county commissioners, by Oregon statute. All fees go directly to the general fund. It is suspected that fees alone do not cover the true costs, and that they will not pay for mandated services nor the traditional informational services to the public.

It is suspected that if both the commissioners and citizenry realized the adverse impact that suspending proper funding and mandated performance of the county surveyor's office was having on the economy, that immediate and drastic changes would be made.

In earlier days, before proper land records and corner monuments, the situation with regard to them was chaotic; people were killed, and land, lumber and minerals were stolen without proof. Today, the situation is much improved. Most people do not get involved with land problems nor surveying many times in their lives. Others are involved constantly. Those who are involved want accuracy, and the truth and they want it now.

The known possession of land is what you base your home, your taxes, perhaps your livelihood and what you leave your heirs. What would you do if you knew your corners and boundaries were in jeopardy because of a county budget cut-back?

Kenneth E. Fink
Tualatin

LETTERS POLICY

The Post asks that all letters to the editor be typed, double-spaced and signed. Deadline is noon, Tuesday. Letters should be accurate, free of libelous remarks and in good taste. This newspaper attempts to publish all letters it receives and may edit material lightly to conform to guidelines. Maximum length is 200 words.

