

The Sandy Post

Editorial & Opinion

Scott Newton, editor
Kimberly Nelson, advertising representative

Well-run district deserves funding

We urge voters to mark their ballots yes on Tuesday, Dec. 3, allowing the Sandy Elementary District to levy \$2.2 million for the operation of school.

Our reasons for supporting the levy are:

✓ The total budget requirements are 1½ percent higher than last year. The levy amount is 5 percent more, but that is because of a decrease in a number of non-local revenues. This is keeping in mind that the district's expenses, for the most part, have not declined.

As far as per-pupil cost, the Sandy Elementary District is below the state average for elementary districts its size. This is according to state Department of Education figures, which provide a fair method for judging our district.

✓ Our experiences with the schools have been positive. We have dropped in when invited, and at other times at our own convenience. There are several good teachers who are challenging students with interesting and sound educational programs.

✓ We feel the schools have been well maintained. One person told us she thinks the Sandy Grade School looks as good now as it did when she was a student 25 years ago.

✓ We have confidence in the board of directors, in the budget committee, and in the democratic process that makes the system work.

We have confidence in Superintendent Clark Lund. He gives straight answers, honest answers. We have seen him go into board meetings well prepared, with information on everything from the operation of the furnaces to issues as weighty as prayer in school.

✓ The success of the busing cooperative was given a great deal of publicity a few years ago. To refresh people's memories, all local school districts were given an opportunity to participate. Contracted services and all other options were considered in what was an excellent example of cooperation among representatives of Sandy High School, Sandy Elementary and Bull Run.

The cooperative saved over \$185,000 of taxpayers' money its first year in operation.

✓ What is called a basic educational program is financed with this levy. We believe library privileges, physical education, vocational education and music belong in the program.

✓ Wages are 76 percent of the budget. The teachers union and the classified union negotiate with the board. Administrators are not represented by a union. Teachers and administrators have won salary increases the past three years.

While many of us are making the same amount we were several years ago, or even less, salaries in the Sandy Elementary District fall within acceptable ranges.

✓ We support and believe in public education. If we lose the middle class student — and there has already been some erosion — it will be to the detriment of all children.

✓ Finally, the value of education cannot be measured. That one extra teacher might just find that youngster who would have turned to a life of crime if he hadn't been channeled into something positive. There are doctors, scientists and, if we're lucky, even some potentially good state legislators among all those Sandy kids. They belong in school.

If the Sandy Elementary District was poorly run, Sandy residents would be right to close it up and make some changes. But the district is well run, and its needs are not unreasonable.



Commentary

Voters given the priority in elections

by BARBARA ROBERTS

Oregon's last regular 1985 election date to consider school levy elections was Nov. 5. When the votes were counted, 11 Oregon school districts faced closure before the first 1986 regular election date on March 25.

For 25,776 children in Oregon, we had a real crisis.

But there was hope. Because of Oregon's limited number of regular election dates, the 1977 Legislature had provided another alternative. The law provided for special elections to prevent school closure.

However, the special provision in the law had been rarely used and the language was not clear. Conflicting opinions about the law resulted in different practices in counties where schools faced closure.

As secretary of state and chief elections officer of Oregon, I am required by law "to obtain and maintain uniformity in the application, operation and interpretation of election laws."

The law in question (ORS 255.355)

allowed for special elections if the superintendent of public instruction concurs with the local school district that closure will occur. Furthermore, the law provides that the requirements relating to the notification process and sample ballots shall be waived. But there were ambiguities in the law that demanded clarification for school districts, county election clerks and voters.

My office is administering a law designed by the Legislature solely to address special elections dealing with the problem of school closure. I remain mindful of that policy mandate. However, legislative clarification of the law cannot wait for the Legislature to reconvene in January 1987.

On Nov. 6, therefore, my office held a public hearing on a proposed administrative rule to govern the special elections for the 11 affected school districts. Under the rule, any district where closure was more than 34 days away was required to use the full 34 days for election notice and other procedures normally used in

regular elections. Eight of the 11 districts fell into this category.

Because closure was imminent in the three remaining districts — Gresham Grade School District, Albany and Sandy Elementary — a revised election schedule was necessary. Gresham was scheduled to close on Nov. 27; Albany on Dec. 4; and Sandy had closed on Nov. 7.

Each district requested a Nov. 26 election. After examining the circumstances of the school districts and the requirements for absentee voters, I set all three elections for Dec. 3. (Editor's note: The Gresham Union High School District, which will close about Jan. 1 unless a levy is approved, will have a \$4.78 million operating levy on a Dec. 17 ballot. The Sandy Elementary District's schools are closed, and will not reopen unless voters approve a \$2.2 million levy.)

In making these very difficult choices, under Oregon law and the provisions of the newly adopted administrative rule, some flexibility was necessary. The highest priority

was given to those voters who regularly use the more time-consuming absentee ballot process — senior citizens, handicapped citizens and our military voters.

For voter participation and convenience, I wanted to avoid strict timetables that might cause an election to fall on a weekend or holiday. I gave preference to Tuesday, our traditional election day.

The standards I have used for the first application of this important new rule will guide me in all such future decisions. I will work to ensure voter participation, uniform election procedures and a clear process to meet the Legislature's directive for special elections dealing with school closure.

The final decision on school closure rests with the Oregon voter.

Secretary of State Barbara Roberts is a Multnomah County resident and former member of the Mt. Hood Community College Board, Parkrose School District Board and the Oregon Legislature.

Claims of payment hide real reasons

A lot of people have told us they have already paid for their children's education, but we question their math.

Let's assume, for the sake of argument, that the average person pays \$600 in property taxes for education, and that the average cost of educating a student is \$3,000 a year.

That means it would take five years of paying taxes to compensate for one year of a child's education. If a child attends school for 12 years, that's a 60-year commitment.

Some people may indeed be able to show that they have paid for their children's education, though that is not really important anyway. There is a larger question here than who has paid for what.

Letter to the editor

Lesson in closure is that each vote counts

Even though Sandy Elementary students are out of school, there are some valuable lessons they can learn during this time.

On Nov. 5, 36 people directly affect the schooling of 1,400-plus students and the jobs of 150-plus employees; what a testimony to the fact that each person's vote counts — and counts heavily!

It is my hope that each student, when grown, will think back to this time when he was out of school and remember that his vote counts, and with the privilege of being able to vote goes the responsibility of exercising that right intelligently.

Linda Verdoorn
Boring

A letter home

Language program the right choice

by DAVID BURGHARDT

I was born in Portland, Ore., on March 28, 1965. In 1970 my family moved to Eagle Creek. My parents, Adam and Charlotte Burghardt, along with my brother Michael, and myself began our new life on a small acreage there.

I attended the Sandy School District starting in 1971. I attended Sandy Union High School focusing my attention and studies on the German language. I was involved in the Future Farmers of America, and in 1981 went to Kansas City, Mo., for their national convention, and supported the Meat Judging Team, representing the state of Oregon.

In February of 1982, I left Sandy Union High School and started my college education at Mount Hood Community College, majoring in foreign languages with a minor in education. In college, I studied German and French, along with my other general studies. I received my high school diploma in 1983, and continued college for another year.

During college I held jobs in the Sandy area. I was employed by Sandy Lockers, owned by Joel and Florence Medders, for approximately three years. There I learned skills such as meat-cutting and retailing. At the same time I was employed at Sandy High School as an assistant secretary/switchboard operator. A few months later I left my job at the high school and began working at TJ's Fireside Dining and Lounge, owned by Bill and Bette Herzog, as a full-time waiter. In 1984, Multnomah Education Service District contacted

me for employment. It was a great shock as they wanted me to be an instructor in German for the district's grade schools. I quit college in 1984 to work for a year to earn money for higher education in a state university. I worked for TJ's and MESD until late March, 1985.

In January of 1985, I entered the Navy under the Delayed Entry Program. I took many tests and qualified in a rating of the Navy as a Cryptological Technician Interpretive Branch (CTI). I left Oregon in the end of May for Basic Training in San Diego, Calif. After completing two months of basic military requirements in basic training, I was transferred to Monterey, Calif., to study the Russian language. I am to be in Monterey for one year to master Russian in a fast-paced course taught by native Russians.

I am getting an education in language that I could never afford in the "civilian world." I will use the language skills I am learning here in translating written Russian and radio intercepts from the Soviet Union. This particular rating in the Navy requires a Top Secret security clearance, and I cannot explain any further my job requirements.

After I leave Monterey in late June of 1986, I will go to Texas for six months to study skills that I will need in my new occupation. In just two months we had gained the knowledge and vocabulary to get by in the Soviet Union, and the equivalent of one and a half years of university-level Russian.

After Texas my next duty station will be in Spain, Japan, Greece,

Turkey or Washington, D.C.

The schooling here is very difficult and very intense. At times you wonder if you will ever graduate from this military institution. But, you've got to keep a stiff upper lip, and always look on the bright side. The other languages have helped me in understanding rules of the language. Already my French has almost completely disappeared, and my German is slipping. It's depressing watching your previously-learned languages leaving your mind, but on the other hand it is a good feeling that you are learning another language at a much more accelerated pace for the defense of your country.

I feel good about myself, I always have. I think that is what everyone needs to do — think positive. I have always reached for the stars and the impossible, and will continue to do so. So even if you come from a small

town such as Sandy, if you strive for your goals honestly and constantly, anything is attainable. I have worked hard for a long time to become an interpreter, and now I finally will become one. It is a big change leaving a small town life, and entering into the military to work with others from around the nation.

It is so nice being in "sunny California," but I do miss Oregon a lot, it's just not the same here. I plan on returning to Oregon after I leave the military because Oregon is where I belong.

By the way, I'd like to say "Hi" to everyone in Sandy, and especially the ones that helped me in my decision to join the armed forces.

As they say in Russian, "Vcey horoshevo, u rabotaete trudno, jeeth budet pokazuebath horoshevue vremina." Translation: "Good luck, and work hard, life will show you good times."

Policy on letters

Letters to the editor should be typed, double-spaced and signed. An address and telephone number should also be provided, although only the name of the letter writer and the city or area he is from will be published.

Letter writers may also wish to include a title or office held if it is appropriate considering the subject matter of the letter.

The news deadline of noon, Tuesday is also the deadline for letters to the editor.

Letters should be accurate, free of libelous remarks and in good taste. This newspaper attempts to publish all letters it receives from area residents. We reserve the right to edit letters to conform to style guidelines or for length. A preferred maximum length is 300 words.

Vote Dec. 3