

The Sandy Post

Editorial & Opinion

Scott Newton, editor
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Volunteers make departments tick

Recently two local boards of directors held banquets to honor volunteer firemen. Such awards assemblies are displays of appreciation, and occasionally the media will take advantage of such opportunities as a slant for a news story recognizing community service.

No amount of recognition, however, can compensate for the service volunteer firefighters provide.

Their specialties range from driving, firefighting and providing medical services to investigation and management.

Volunteer firefighters have the potential to put in hundreds of hours through training programs, meetings and emergency calls. In Sandy, Boring and Hoodland, volunteers meet weekly for training, or to conduct business.

Sandy has a long tradition of volunteerism, beginning when local citizens rallied neighbors to approve the formation of a fire district.

In Hoodland, volunteers may be asked to scale cliffs in order to provide medical services. Volunteers in Boring earlier this year apprehended a bank robber; a man, at the time, they assumed was carrying a handgun.

Public servants, educators and the police have all been publicly chastised by at least a few vocal citizens over the past few years. So far, firefighters have retained a sparkling image. Some of that may be due to luck, but certainly a little of it has to do with quick response times, thorough training and a willingness to put the public interest first.

In Sandy, Chief Gary Connelly said the paid staff is set up to serve the volunteer force.

If that is the prevailing attitude — and we have a feeling it just might be — then the real winner is the public, which is being served best of all.

Personally speaking

In 1986, appreciate little pleasures

Last year was a pretty rough year for our combined families. Learning to live with children again, after living alone for several years, has been good for me.

Although, to be honest, I did use up my reserve energy and every drop of the patience that I had on hand. When it ran out completely, only then did I see the complete ridiculousness of the whole situation, of just how staid I had become.

I was getting upset over things that didn't matter at all. At least, not in the long run. I was fussing, like an old maid, over things like the bathroom towel not being on the rack when I reached for it. It was either on the floor, the toilet, or completely removed. Things like that.

They came in May, on Mother's Day, and I think it was October before it occurred to me to just open the linen closet door and get a clean towel instead of getting upset over the missing one.

I think probably people get so set in their ways that simple solutions to minor problems don't occur to them. They just get upset and start screaming and hollering over inconsequential things like just not finding a towel on the rack in a busy, filled-up household.

I'm sure my daughter and son-in-law used up most, or all, of their patience too on me and my idiosyncrasies. I think it is probably harder to be a "guest" in someone's home than it is to be the householder.

Anyway, they are now in their own home, and we are all so happy about it. What they did, since money was almost nonexistent, was to buy a mobile home that had been fire damaged. They used my daughter's diamond ring for the collateral of \$500 for the down payment. The total price was \$2,500. It is a 14-by-65-foot trailer, larger than mine. The man who moved it here did it on credit. He is now paid. A member of the Adventist church donated the materials for the electrical wiring, plus he did the wiring. Other local businesses gave them credit. All, or most, are now paid.

They had help from visiting grandparents from Iowa, who helped block it underneath, and tore out the old burned materials, and helped with the painting and general cleaning (I even helped wallpaper). Now, the job is done.

Everyone pitched in who came to visit, friends, relatives and even passer-bys, and they now have a home that is valued at \$10,000, at least. The roof, framing and outside were OK.

They will have it paid off by July, and then all they will need is to pay the lot rent each month.

They have a home. What did it matter if I couldn't find a towel on the rack in the bathroom when I washed my face and groped for one with soap



by JOY WOOD

in my eyes?

The children's fingerprints on the walls and windows of my house now look like treasures to me. I hate to wash them off.

The sounds of their laughter, and the memory of the games we played, when I was at my wit's end with what I call their wiggling, these will stay with me, I hope, for many years to come.

And I am going to pay more attention to kittens at play from now on. Just sitting and watching kittens playing is a very worthwhile thing to do, I find. And, I am going to watch more sunrises and sunsets in the new year, and remember the ones we watched together, the children and I.

Also, I've decided that I am going to go to the beach and walk barefoot in the sand as often as I can this next year.

In the "Why don't they" category, I wonder why they don't make cassettes of the sounds of children playing. And even, why don't the builders build new houses with one room in them with a glass ceiling so that you can see the stars on nights like we've had lately? Then you wouldn't have to stand out in the cold with the children.

1985 was a good year for me. It was a catharsis. I hope 1986 won't be too lonely, but I have all these lovely memories, and all this new energy, from this past year's activities. I feel 10 years younger, more alert, more sensitive, and stronger in all ways.

I wonder if I could be a perennial taker-in of families in distress? Of course, I'd just have to get a bigger house. You have no idea how it is to live with every bit of your house occupied by people, cats and dog. Sometimes the only unoccupied space was in the hallway, and it was used by foot traffic to the bathroom at nights.

If I did take in more families, I could always install a roller towel in the bathroom.



Commentary

Apprenticeship program benefits state

by MARY WENDY ROBERTS
Bureau of Labor and Industries

If I told you the average age of school teachers in Oregon was 60, would you be concerned?

Of course you would. Who would teach our children when those teachers retire?

Luckily, we have teachers aplenty. We do, however, have a labor shortage in another area: many of our highly skilled workers are approaching retirement age. The average age of machinists in the U.S. is 54.5, and for tool and die makers, it's 57.5. Many other high-paying professions requiring trained workers are seeking skilled employees. New and expanding industries, as well, look for a skilled workforce as they open new plants.

In the Dec. 21 edition of The Oregonian, I counted 350 job openings, offering good salaries, advancement and security. The only catch is that the jobs required special training.

The Bureau of Labor and Industries is the catalyst in Oregon for the training needed so badly by both

growth industry and out of work Oregonians. It is called apprenticeship, and it is a model of one of the oldest and best forms of training in the world.

Here's how apprenticeship works, and how it helps employers and employees alike in Oregon.

Apprenticeship is a combination of on-the-job and classroom training. The Bureau acts somewhat like a clearinghouse, seeking out employers in need of trained personnel, people in need of skills, and community colleges and other educational institutions who provide the classroom study.

We offer apprenticeship in 176 occupations, from pastry chef to diesel mechanic.

The Bureau's Apprenticeship and Training Division works with over 5,000 employers who have agreed to take on apprentices. Over 3,400 Oregonians are in apprenticeship programs lasting two to five years. The beauty of apprenticeship is twofold. Apprentices earn a wage from the very first day on the job.

Employers have help doing what they would ordinarily have to do alone: search for, screen and train new employees.

Competition for apprenticeship positions can be stiff. Sometimes 35 applicants apply for one position. Employers willing to take on unskilled apprentices often want their trainees to have a high school diploma or GED, and have good grades in science and math. Appearance counts, as well as a good attitude towards sticking with the program.

"Pre-apprenticeship" is a place to start. Last week I announced that the Bureau of Labor and Industries had become the first state agency of its kind in the U.S. to receive a grant from Job Corps to help provide just such training. This \$57,500 grant gives us the opportunity to seek out those most in need of pre-

apprenticeship. We'll be looking for 200 Oregonians, ages 16-21, who are determined to make something of themselves superior to what chance has brought them.

The young people will be placed in Job Corps training centers for six months to one year. They'll get room and board, a monthly allowance, clothing allowance, a savings account and most important of all, they'll gain the skills to go on to an entry level job, or make it into an apprenticeship program.

Oregon faces stiff competition, too, as the state seeks new industry, and new applications for agriculture and timber products. Skilled employees are the state's best calling card.

If you are interested in answering an advertisement for a job waiting for a skilled, experienced employee, call the Bureau of Labor and Industries at 229-5550.

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.

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 local residents. We reserve the right to edit letters to conform to style guidelines or for length. A preferred maximum length is 300 words.

The Sandy Post

(USPS 481-180)

MEMBER Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association, National Newspaper Association and U.S. Suburban Press
Published weekly Thursdays by the Outlook Publishing Co., Box 68, Sandy, Oregon 97055. Second class postage paid at Sandy, Oregon.

668-5548

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

In Clarkamas County per year	\$9.00
Multnomah County	\$10.00
Elsewhere in Oregon	\$11.50
In Northwest and Pacific Coast States	\$14.00
Outside Oregon per year	\$17.00
Outside Northwest and Pacific Coast States, per year	\$17.00

Sandy Post, Sandy, Oregon 97055

No. 52

December 31, 1985

