

## The Sandy Post

## Editorial &amp; Opinion

Scott Newton, editor  
Kimberly Nelson, advertising representativeReview process  
viable exercise

One thing is clear when it comes to Sandy's sign ordinance review committee. Several people have different ideas about what the committee recommended.

That, however, is not a negative reflection on the work of the sign review committee. City Planner Don Wilson has done a good job of organizing and defining the ordinances. A rough draft of the proposal was praised by members of the committee at its final meeting.

More importantly, some of the common complaints about the sign ordinance were aired. We expect an open debate when the issue comes before the City Council.

The ordinances pertaining to signs have considerable symbolic significance in Sandy. They are kind of a rallying point for people who are upset with the city. The sign ordinances — and we have heard this a hundred times — are evidence that the Sandy City Council is anti-business, critics say.

We are more inclined to believe the sign ordinances are working. On the west end of Sandy, where newer businesses have conformed to the sign ordinances, there is ample identification without unsightly excess.

It is true the sign review committee, headed by Dennis Dries, raised more issues than it solved. That is to its credit. The code book will never be a simple document, but it is a fair one.

All people who have aired complaints about the sign ordinances in the past two years were invited to participate in the review. The City Council, to its credit, sought a wide-open discussion of the issues.

Regardless of what the City Council does now, no one will be able to claim they were unwilling to consider all points of view.

Temporary signs  
should be banned

It is time for the Sandy City Council to take the bull by the horns. When it reviews the sign ordinances, it should ban temporary signs — sign boards — forever.

The sign boards, or "A" boards, are often placed on city sidewalks. Only a few of them are attractive, and we cannot imagine that they are generating a lot of business.

New businesses, of course, should be allowed to use temporary signs. That is already addressed in proposed changes to the sign ordinance.

But a proposal to allow sign boards whenever a business has a special to promote should be junked.

About four years ago, the City Council allowed businesses to advertise specials on sign boards because it was thought such promotions might help strapped businesses. But, instead of advertising specials to lure customers into the stores, many simply use the sign boards for identification.

Only permanent signs should be allowed for identification. Businesses that want to offer specials should put up "reader boards." There are several reader boards in Sandy, and they serve a purpose but are not unattractive.

A proposal to allow special 30-day promotions by use of banners, flags and streamers should be approved. The 30-day provision, as it is written, would allow flexibility. For example, a business could break up the promotional period into four seven-day periods.

The 30-day provision is enforceable. Businesses will have to apply for permits, and simple record keeping will show who is in compliance. The 30-day promotional period should be allowed in all commercial districts in Sandy.

Sign boards should not be allowed during the 30-day promotions. There is admittedly a fine line when considering the aesthetics of signs. Why is a banner OK during special promotions but not a sign board?

Perhaps it is the proliferation of sign boards. Or the fact they are left out on sidewalks when businesses are closed.

Regardless, we think there is a difference. We would prefer to see businesses attempt to lure customers into the store with fresh coats of paint, attractive landscaping and creative window displays.

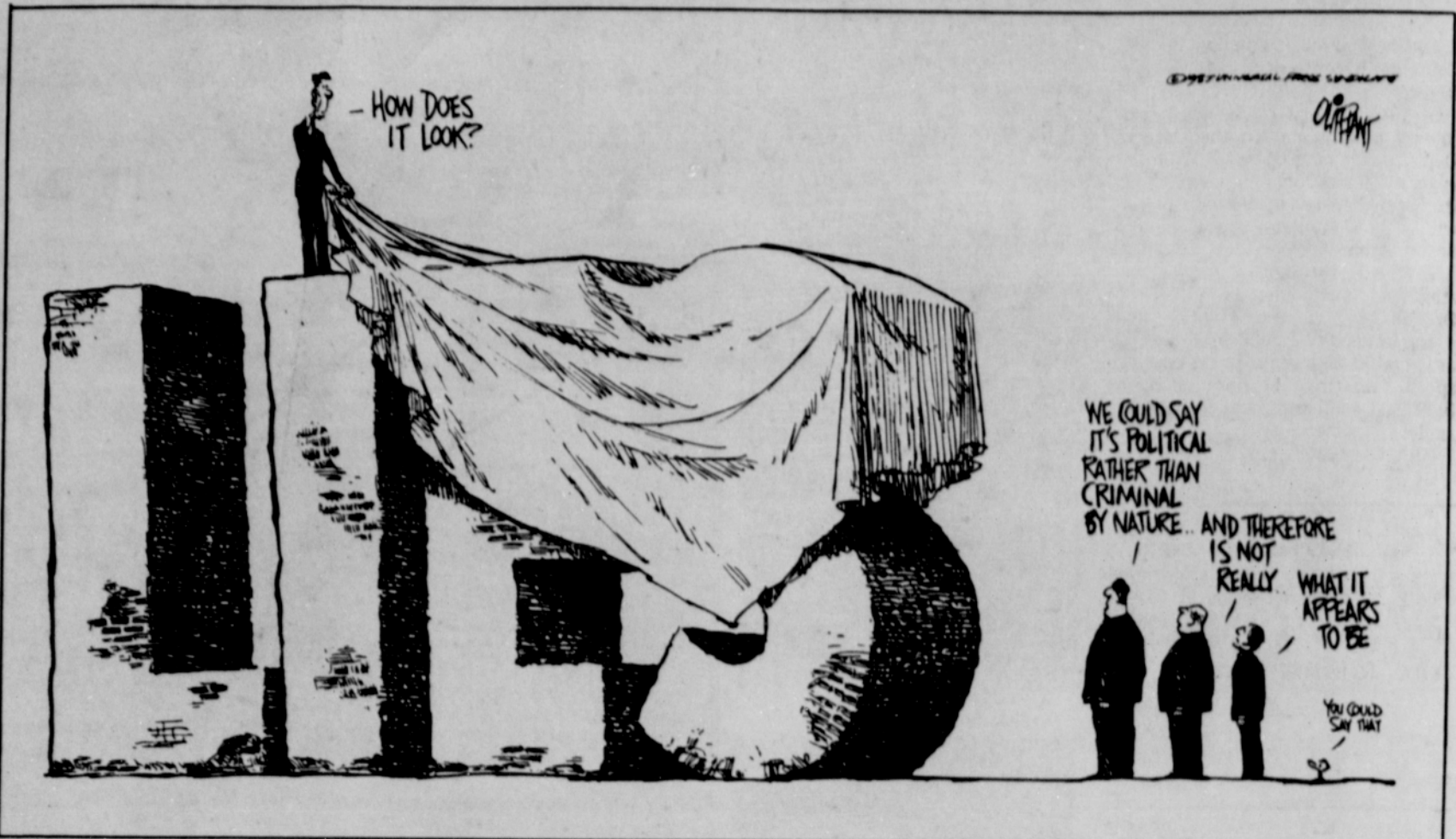
The City Council has the enforcement mechanism to rid the city of sign boards. After a grace period, the city could begin issuing citations through the municipal court system.

Such a move would make life uncomfortable for city councilors, but it is time to take such an action.

## Letter policy

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.

We reserve the right to edit letters to conform to style guidelines, for length or to remove libelous material. Letters should be 300 words long.



## Personally speaking

## Used Car Universe not without pitfalls

by PHIL CHRISTENSEN  
Correspondent

Recently I came out of hiding and openly admitted to having run into a variety of things with cars. The result of these mishaps has been the need to find a constant supply of replacement vehicles.

The other option, of course, is simply to drive wrecks. I have tried both.

Driving wrecks has its good points. No one asks to borrow my car when I drive wrecks, and even hitchhikers have waved me on.

However, when I own wrecks, my wife drives wrecks, too. My little boy rides in the back seat of a wreck. There are always wrecks parked in front of my house. Even my dog starts looking bad.

When I get out of my car at Fred Meyer's, people look away. If I park on the highway, I find a red tag on my window when I return. Driving a wreck is not good for my self-image.

Consequently, I have invested quality time at car dealerships and have arrived at some conclusions about the experience.

People who go shopping for cars

carry invisible signs that only car salesmen can see. The signs say, "Hello. Help me alter my debt-to-earning ratio."

Wealthy people buy cars differently, though. They simply negotiate a little and write a personal check. I have developed a theory about how things got to be this way.

Let's say we have two groups. Group "A" and, to keep this simple, Group "B." Group "A" is very smart and invests \$200 in the bank every month. They take advantage of a phenomena called "compound interest."

Group "B" spends that same \$200 each month to repay a bank for something they bought four years ago. This group is involved with interest, too, but use it differently.

The major difference is what the two groups end up with. Group "A" ends up with a lot of money. Then they write checks for new cars.

Group "B" ends up with no money and a car that quit smelling like new vinyl years ago. Now it smells like sour formula the baby has spilled on the carpet and doggie droppings the toddler has tracked in.

I have not yet determined what Group "A" drives to work while they save their money. My guess is they either walk or mooch rides from Group "B."

As a disgruntled, part-time member of Group "B," I am staging a private revolt. To do this, I have entered a unique world called the Used Car Universe. It is a sort of Twilight Zone made up of classified ads, Consumer Report ratings and strange salesmen with unusual body shapes.

Used-car deals usually involve a great amount of stress. The scene is like this: A salesman is dangling car keys in front of you and locking you in a sterile interrogation chamber. You hear yourself gushing out every sordid detail of your life for the past 15 years. You are disclosing the names and phone numbers of your parents and best friends.

Another large man is offering to get you monthly payments of \$43 on a 16-year loan at 30 percent interest. He is telling you it's the right car and he is your friend.

You are signing next to red marks on hundreds of papers. You drive away in something that makes funny

noises.

A friend of mine came up with an interesting way to survive the Used Car Universe. It may be useful to someone, so I will relate it here.

First, he looks through Consumer Reports for a car with a horrible rating.

Then he finds one of these that has been taken care of. (Tips for the non-mechanical buyer: Is the trunk clean? Are all four tires inflated? Is the license plate straight?)

At this point, he offers the salesman half of whatever the car is marked. The salesman acts insulted, rolls his eyes and leaves to check with the manager.

When given a generous counteroffer, my friend refuses it and leaves. He remains polite because he will be coming back in two weeks. These cars don't sell, he has discovered.

When he returns, he takes a copy of Consumer Report and shows it to the salesman. He mentions that he is more firm about his price than ever, and gets the car for that price.

He has a bumper sticker that reads, "Cars. Deal 'em, drive 'em, dent 'em and ditch 'em." Yeah, that's the ticket.

## Issue means jobs in Oregon

## Trade legislation among most difficult

by SENATOR BOB PACKWOOD  
Special for The Post

The elections are over and new members have settled in for the 100th Congress. While many tough issues face us in this new Congress, one in particular has been given a top priority: trade.

As ranking Republican on the Senate Finance Committee, which has jurisdiction over trade, my priorities will be to develop legislation which will lower the deficit without erecting protectionist trade barriers that will invite retaliation from our trade partners and sacrifice Oregon jobs in the process. The fact that one in five jobs in Oregon is dependent upon trade increases pressure to assure that legislation will safeguard both national and Oregon interests.

In my experience, I have found that this country is made up of about one-third traditional protectionists. Traditional protectionists are those who would like to close up the import-export market and trade only internally. Under this system, we would not buy automobiles and electronics from foreign countries, and we would not sell computers, food commodities

or lumber overseas. Simply put, it would be an American common market.

At first glance, this theory doesn't seem too bad. We wouldn't have to worry about a trade deficit as Americans would only be buying American made products. However, more thoughtful consideration suggests protectionism would lead to an uncompetitive society, a decline in our standard of living and a decrease in total employment.

In Oregon, international trade itself is a big employer. More than 10,000 people are employed in the importation of automobiles alone. So when anyone talks about putting restrictions on trade — imports or exports — for Oregon, they are talking about losing jobs.

Trade-related jobs include what comes in over the docks, and what goes out over the docks, or is insured or is prepared for export, or serviced and prepared after it's been imported. Care must be taken when the details of trade legislation are being drawn up or we may find that the trade-off for a lower trade deficit is higher unemployment.

I am certain that we can construct

a trade bill that will be good for this country, and good for Oregon. The bill must force open markets that have been closed to Oregon products. We must be able to freely export agricultural and manufactured goods, wood products, and other products and services in which Oregon has a competitive advantage. It must be a bill that will help ease the trade deficit without stooping to the protec-

tionism that might temporarily save some jobs in a few states, but will ultimately lead to a decline in employment and prosperity in Oregon and throughout America.

A trade bill that fits these requirements will be tough to write, but it is possible. Something must be done about the trade deficit, but at the same time, we must be careful how we do it.

## Letters to the editor

Patrons wants  
what he paid for

I would like to respond to the writers who claim our elementary school is operating at top efficiency. They claim our figure of 15 percent includes handicapped children, which is incorrect.

The number of students who are below the ninth grade level when entering high school is actually more than 20 percent. To allow for the handicapped children and not mislead the patrons, we used 15 percent. I would think supporters of the present system and especially school board members would know the correct figures.

We also noted special mention of Oregon's seniors who compiled the second highest SAT test scores in the nation. The writer was kind enough to mention that only 45 percent of the class of 1986 participated. Educators repeatedly use the statistics, but to me they are meaningless. The 45 percent who take the test are college

bound and/or students with above average grades. What is accomplished by testing the cream of the crop? A more meaningful statistic would be the test results of all high school seniors.

Personally, I resent the inference that generally the schools are doing a good job. Generally is not the point. Our concern is over the 15 percent who are predestined to ditch digging or minimum wage jobs because our school system is not doing its job. In other words, if even one student fails to receive a solid required education, it is not acceptable.

We pay more than enough to support this school system, yet at the first suggestion that we are not getting our money's worth, we hear all kinds of objections. Is this a cover up or an honest difference of opinion? Why should we pay our money and sit idly by and take what is handed out? We pay the price so that every student will receive a required quality education; now we want what we pay for.

Lloyd A. Cummins, secretary  
Affordable Education Association  
Sandy

## Bobcats



by Adam Kraft