

The Sandy Post

Editorial & Opinion

Scott Newton, editor
Kimberly Nelson, advertising representative

All candidates earn admiration for their courage

The final tabulations of an election stir something in those who follow local politics. After all the dust has settled, there is some second-guessing, some regrets, and some sighs of relief.

There also should be some satisfaction since every local school and fire district had at least one contested race. And all the candidates had a lofty goal: public service.

Candidates face risks when they run for public office. They must be willing to share a little of themselves with the public. While local issues may not seem exciting to some people, the public discussion of those issues requires tact and good judgment.

We have our share of criticisms, of course. We have to second-guess voters on a few races. And, in the case of the Sandy Elementary District, where only one of two positions open was contested, we have to wonder why there was not more interest, especially when one considers that the district was the center of controversy only a year ago when school closed.

But these are not criticisms of the individuals who ran for board positions. To run for a non-paying public office takes courage, and the people who took the plunge deserve our admiration.

Personally speaking

Drug use haunts parents of users

The call came from the school. "Can we see you about your daughter Susan?" they said.

My friend Mary had a pretty good idea that it was about drugs, but the blow still struck hard and the ache is permanent in the pit of her stomach. It is an awful pain, all balled up with failure and grief. Concern and anger. And love.

Mary is one of three mothers I know who have gone through the same crisis in the last few months — evaluation of their kids to determine the extent of their drug and alcohol dependence, a treatment center, Al-anon meetings, counseling sessions, slammed telephones, tears.

I was not surprised to hear that Susan was abusing drugs and alcohol. This is the little kid who, when she was 5, charged head first into the deep water of the lake. A noisy, boisterous, brash little girl. The memory of her being hauled wringing wet but unrepentant from the lake was still fresh when suddenly she was in high school and the hair on one side of her head was dyed an

'She told me she didn't have any friends. She told me I couldn't tell her who her friends should be.'

awful purple. She went away for a week's vacation with a friend and came back with a half-dozen holes pierced in each ear. She wore so much junk dangling from her ears she should have been deafened by the clatter. Bit by bit she added the dreary black clothes and the black jacket with the metal studs.

It's just a fashion statement, she assured her mother. And then she hung a picture of Sid Vicious on her bedroom wall. And took up smoking. And her friends came to the door with their sallow faces, their tortured hair and their grim expressions.

Mary and I talked about it. Are punks of the 1980s the same as the hippies of the 1960s, just people who dress differently? After all, when Mary and I first met each other, she was in a mini-skirt so short that we blushed to think about it now.

Mary and I talked about drugs and wondered about Susan. Mary asked Susan flat out if she was using. Susan assured her mom that though some of her friends used drugs, it was not a normal practice. She knew better,



Sharon Nesbitt

she said.

But then the school work began to slump and teachers took notice and Mary got the call.

"You're ruining my life, Mother," Susan screamed over the telephone from the treatment center. "And what," said her mom, "do you think you are doing to mine?"

This weekend Mary and I talked about what she could have done to prevent this, and the one thing that came through clearly is that Mary's instincts were sound.

She suspected Susan's friends. And she was right. The peer pressure of friends absorbed in the drug culture proved to be too much. The heavy black leather jacket that Susan wore with such a swagger had weighed down her soul.

Mary spoke to the drug counselor about Susan's friends with the spiked hair and the perforated ears and the dead black clothes. Mary called them Susan's social group.

"That's no social group," the counselor said. "They were together because they were users together."

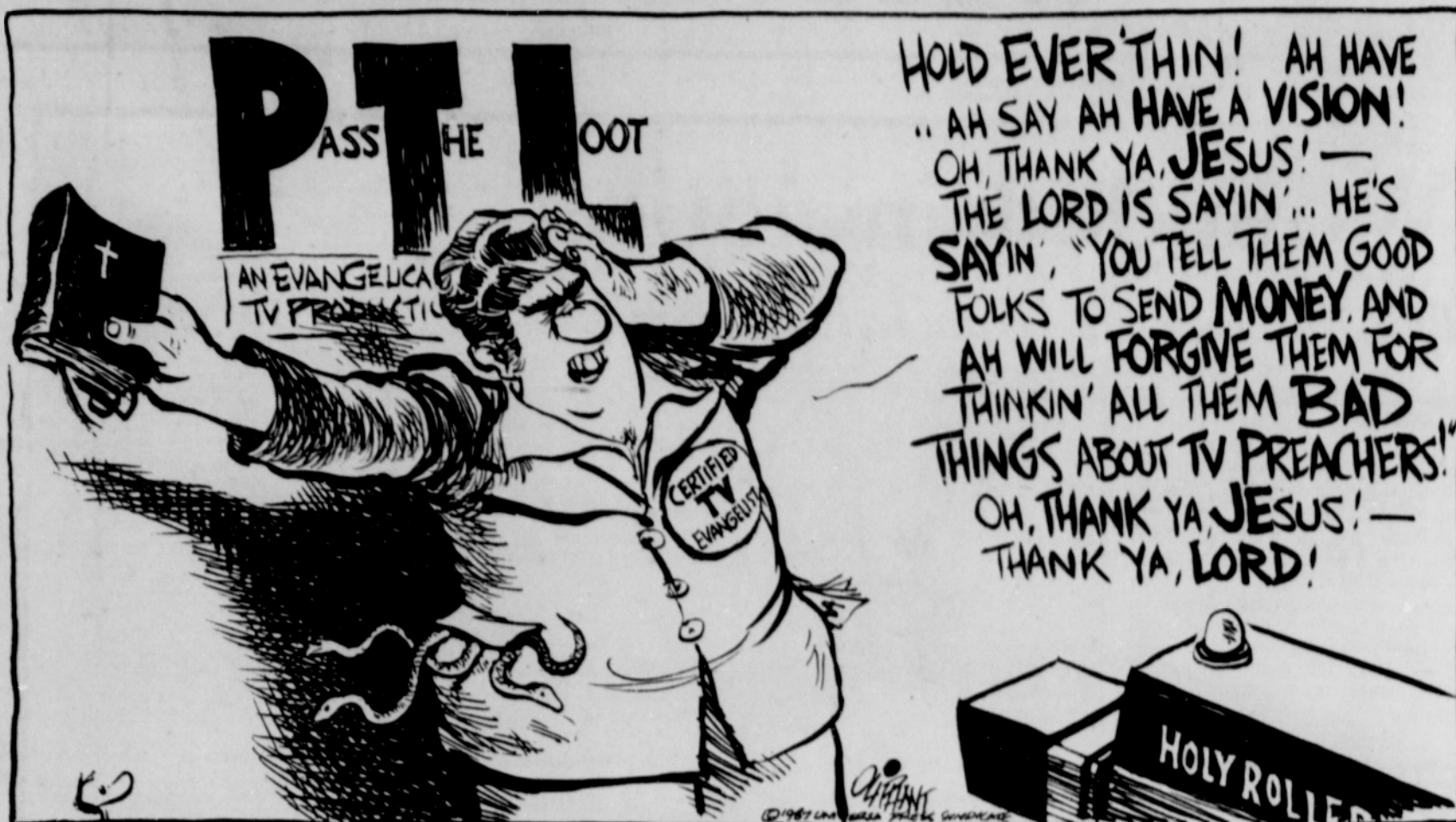
So Mary learned something new. Sometimes you should judge a book by its cover. As they say, "If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it's probably a duck."

But Mary still isn't sure what she should have done when Susan started to hang out with people who would eventually lead her to drug and alcohol abuse.

"She told me she didn't have any friends," Mary said. "She told me I couldn't tell her who her friends should be."

"Sure, I suppose I could have grounded her and told her she couldn't see them," Mary mused. Then she raised the other specter that haunts parents of teen-agers. "But you do too much of that and you might come home some day and find them in the garage with the motor running."

They don't pass out many awards for raising kids, but they should.



Letters to the editor

Member of NEA not a militant

Is anyone else tired of Lloyd Cummins' letters?

It seems he always has a letter printed, but really now... two in one edition! I wonder, doesn't he have anything else to do? Does anyone really read his letters? I don't anymore. They all seem the same to me.

I already know what he writes. It reminds me of some children I have seen who will do almost anything for attention, regardless of the kind of attention they receive.

This time he finally caught my attention because I am a professional educator and pay for my membership in the National Education Association. Though I was not surprised by the usual negative tone of his letter, I was left wondering how I should feel about being called an "ultra liberal militant!"

In his letter, he writes that he is suspicious of the N.E.A. goals. I am suspicious of his goals; what does he hope to achieve?

Pamela Kim York
N.E.A. member
Sandy

Educators attempt to protect turf

Clackamas County Clerk John F. Kauffman informs patrons (The Oregonian, March 9) the expected voter turn-out for the March 31 election may reach 60 percent.

This is welcome news to most residents and is made possible by the mail-in vote which accommodates this. Voters feel comfortable with

this process.

We note with interest that most of the new criticism of the system has been brought before the legislature recently has been voiced by educational interests. Being an American and aware of the democratic practices involved at any of our election processes, it seems unreal that others would go to extremes to discourage voting.

Certain groups of educational interests believe they can influence voting results and will go to any lengths to protect their turf. I do not believe I have to even drop a hint as to who they are.

Be encouraged, as I am, that Mr. Kauffman has the fortitude to say, "Critics of voting by mail, particularly school district officials, contend it makes it easier to defeat operating levies because mail balloting turns out a larger negative vote." Wherever I have lived, the community slogan has always been "Get out and vote," and "Your vote counts."

I would surmise these slogans were abandoned about the time teaching of the alphabet was discarded by teachers. They definitely apply to a vote by mail school levy election. Should teacher unions and administrators have the last say in this matter?

Lloyd A. Cummins,
executive secretary
Affordable Education Association
Sandy

Neighbors helped in time of need

Our family would like to thank the Kelso Community Club, Kelso School, Sandy Fire District, friends, neighbors and our family for their help and support after our recent

house fire.

The money and clothing helped us out a great deal.

We can't thank everyone enough and the help still keeps coming. Thanks a lot.

Jay D. Yeager and family
Sandy

AEA watchdogs howling at moon

Wonderful! A first step! Mr. Cummins of the AEA (I still think that stands for Against Education Anyhow) admitted in his last letter that there is more than one way to figure the cost of educating a student, and he admitted he uses the formula that will give him the highest figure.

But the real issue, and the point that Mr. Cummins conveniently did not respond to, is not which formula you use (his or the state of Oregon's) but that if you are going to make comparisons, use figures that were obtained using the same formula. The AEA does not do that.

In a letter dated March 5, they used numbers obtained with their formula (the one designed to give the higher estimate) and then compared those figures with numbers obtained with a different formula.

By doing it this way, they then try to tell us that costs in Sandy are 25 percent higher than the national average, when in truth, if you use the same formula for both, Sandy costs are lower than the national average. I feel this is a deceitful trick.

As a parent with four children in Sandy schools (not a representative of the administration or teachers union), I not only object to these deceitful comparisons, but the misleading terms used by the AEA. When they seem to run low on negative criticism, they turn a

positive into a negative by using misleading terms.

For example, in Mr. Cummins' last letter, he takes the positive fact that in recent achievement testing our students scored above the national average in every class that was tested, but since some classes scored higher than others, he calls that "poor test results" and "an indication that basic education is substandard." Absurd! All scores were above average, how is that substandard?

I have no objections to watchdog groups that alert us to real problems. But when a group must use deceitful comparisons and misleading terms to create issues they are howling at the moon.

Connie Whitlock
Sandy

Sandy Post 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.

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. Letters should be 300 words long.

Safety net would keep schools open

by JACK ZIMMERMAN
Associated Oregon Industries

For the second time in as many years, the Oregon Legislature has enacted major legislation aimed at solving the problem of school finance.

In less than two months of deliberations in Salem such a measure emerged and will be offered to voters in a special statewide election on Tuesday, May 19.

In a nutshell, it does the trick. It keeps schools open without increasing taxes.

If approved by voters this spring,

the proposal will halt recurrences of school closures due to budget levy defeats which have interrupted the education of 25,864 Oregon grade and high school students in 10 individual school districts since 1976.

Supporters also hope it will erase the widely held opinion nationwide that Oregonians don't care enough about educating their young people to keep schools operating.

That conception has been generated by national news coverage of closures at North Bend, Eagle Point, South Lane and La Grande in 1976, Estacada in 1981 and 1986, Brookings in 1982, Lincoln County

and Junction City in 1983 and Port Orford and Sandy Elementary in 1985.

The result of several so-called "safety net" plans, this Legislature's school closure prevention measure most closely resembles one put forth late last fall by Associated Oregon Industries — the statewide organization of private employers.

AOI President Richard M. Butrick sees it as a positive force in restoring Oregon's economic vitality, utilizing the same logic that prompted Gov. Ne. Goldschmidt to embrace it as part of the Oregon Comeback.

But both, along with other supporters, fear voter misconception

may stand in the path of its approval unless clarification is both speedy and widespread. Consequently, plans are under way to launch a comprehensive education campaign prior to the election.

So the message supporters will try to get across to everyone is simply that Measure No. 2 on the special election ballot will keep schools open without increasing taxes.

And when a district does adopt the prior year's levy, that levy does not become a new tax base, nor does it rise by any percentage the following year.

by Adam Kraft

Bobcats



Where to write

State Representative Bob Shiprack, D-Dist. 23, 22610 Forest Park Rd., Beavercreek, Ore., 97004. 631-3817.

State Senator Bob Kintigh, D-Dist. 14, 38865 E. Cedar Flat Road, Springfield, 97478. 746-1842.

Sen. Mark Hatfield, R-Oregon, 711 Hart Building, Washington, D.C., 20510. 202-224-3753. Portland office

phone 221-3386.

Sen. Bob Packwood, R-Oregon, 259 Russell Building, Washington, D.C., 20510. 202-224-5244. Portland office phone 221-3370.

Rep. Denny Smith, R-5th Dist., 1213 Longworth Building, Washington, D.C., 20515. 202-225-5711. Salem office phone (toll free) 800-452-7889.