

The Sandy Post

# Editorial & Opinion

Scott Newton, editor  
Karinda Hedlund, advertising representative

## Reinstate senior portion of funding

Five budget committee meetings, a senior citizen protest in front of City Hall and a nearly two hour City Council meeting have been held to air all the the pros and cons for senior citizen and recreation programs. Now it is time for a compromise.

The Sandy City Council will discuss the issue at its regular meeting June 1.

Senior citizens, advocates for recreation programs and others have been engaged in a guessing game, trying to figure out which vote might swing the balance on the City Council.

The dilemma has no easy answers. A compromise offered by Mayor Deane Wesselink at the last budget committee meeting — a compromise that was at least good enough to garner a 9-4 majority vote — has resulted in a great deal of animosity toward the City Council from senior citizens.

Projections about what would be left of the programs with the compromise budget has generated more controversy.

In our opinion, however, there are some things that are black and white, not gray. They are:

- Some City Council and budget committee members think too much money is being paid out in salaries. Specifically, they do not think the director of community services should make \$35,964 and the assistant director, \$21,769. Both of those figures include fringe benefits.

- When the budget committee voted on the compromise, members did not realize the extent of damage that would be done to programs for senior citizens.

- The 2-cent per-gallon gasoline tax will not be approved by voters. Therefore, if we want streets repaired, the city needs to find money in the general fund. Contrary to some testimony at the City Council meeting Monday, there is plenty of work to do on the streets of Sandy.

- The Sandy Senior Center is doing good work. Many of the outreach programs include identifying low-income senior citizens and helping them stay in their homes. These are human services that absolutely should not be eliminated. Everyone agrees on that point.

In the way of a new compromise, we would recommend to members of the Sandy City Council that they eliminate the \$17,794 recreation program, dedicating the money to street repair. In addition, the City Council should put the \$38,941 back into the Sandy Senior Center program.

One suggestion that has not received a great deal of discussion is a recommendation by the budget committee that an area-wide recreation levy be placed on the ballot. Such a recreation taxing district would allow residents outside the city of Sandy to help pay for programs in which they participate.

A recreation district doesn't have much chance of gaining voter approval; its chances are probably equal to that of the gas tax. Taxpayers are telling school officials they don't want to pay for outside, extra-curricular activities. The budget committee is sending a similar message to the City Council.

We can argue about the value of recreational programs, but the sad fact is the public doesn't want to pay for them. People who don't believe that should consider the Sandy Aquatic Center, which has always been a financial burden for the Sandy Elementary School District.

We believe eliminating the recreation programs, but keeping senior center activities, will come close to meeting the intent of the budget committee's work and at the same time restore valuable human services.

## Grandma enjoyed a good funeral

There was nothing my Grandma enjoyed more than a good funeral.

My paternal grandmother just loved sad occasions. A funeral was more fun than a wedding in her book. It gave her a chance to look morose and shake her head over the woes of this world and then, after the ashes-to-ashes and dust-to-dust part, to sit down to a hearty potluck dinner with her friends and neighbors and visit.

Grandma never chatted or talked or gossiped. She visited. Mostly she liked to visit about who died and who was about to die and what killed them and whether she had it or not.

Naturally, her favorite holiday was Decoration Day. She liked it better than Christmas.

We call it Memorial Day now. We changed its name and changed its date. We gave it a patriotic flavor by emphasizing it as a day to honor our war dead. These days our kids mostly think of it as the first three-day holiday of summer.

But to Grandma, it was the day when we honored all the dead and she never missed making a pilgrimage to the cemetery. On Decoration Day you decorated. We trimmed the grass around our family graves and placed bright flowers against the cold, gray stone.

We would load up at home, stripping the garden of every available flower. We rounded up the cheap wicker baskets that held the flowers. They tipped over in the wind but they were a lot prettier than those inverted metal dunce caps they sell these days.

We kids did the toting, grass clippers and flowers wrapped in wet newspapers and Mason jars of water. Sometimes a rake and a broom.

Grandma would direct the work. We trimmed and swept and arranged and clipped, and we goofed off by tracing the carved letters in the stones with our fingers.

With the flowers all in place we



Sharon Nesbit

would walk around and compare our efforts with those of the other grave decorators, admiring the irises and the peonies and the flags whipping in the wind.

Even though they weren't buried there, we heard about Uncle Harve and Aunt Ella and Uncle Grover and all our long-gone kin. When Grandma's back was turned, we kids would punch each other and giggle about Uncle Grover who drooled and had a speech defect and called himself "Gwover."

We always laughed about Grandma's funeral fixation. But it seems to me that it taught us some of the lessons of death as well as life. We learned early that in the ordinary course of events people we knew lived and died and needed to be remembered.

I'm too far away to tend my family cemetery this Decoration Day. And even if I did, I probably wouldn't admit it because my friends might laugh and think of me macabre. But when I see a cemetery full of flowers, all I see is proof that people are loved and remembered.

I hope someone puts a flower on Grandma's grave and runs a finger along the engraved letters of her name.



## Letters to the editor

### Where was Post's support?

The May 15th issue of The Post lacked something: an editorial stand on the cuts in social services proposed by the city's budget committee.

It was sorely needed before a critical vote by the council Monday.

The Post has taken a courageous stance on issues affecting our town, if not the larger area. Twice it editorialized on behalf of the sheriff's levy.

This makes me wonder why neither a word for or against the cuts was written on page two. Was the editor undecided, or what?

Also, The Post would have done a service to question the mayor about just which roads were in such dire need of repair and to print more figures from the budget.

Since the council vote was Monday, this is clearly a case of "too little, too late." But this is also a vote for more coverage next time.

Christine Bierman-Christiansen  
Sandy

The success of the entire convention was due to the dedication and commitment of Kimberly Nelson, the convention chairwoman, and Roberta Kennedy, the convention treasurer.

Lani Staab  
Immediate past state president  
OFBPW  
Boring

### Gas tax push is blackmail

A couple of years back, I went with the seniors to Salem to watch the legislature in session. A representative who shall remain nameless talked to us about procedure.

"Bills originate in the various committees to be drafted," he told us, "and then go down to the floor to be voted on."

Someone asked him if the head of one committee sometimes votes for a bill in exchange for a vote on another bill.

"I'm afraid it does happen," he admitted.

"Doesn't this smack of political blackmail?" I asked. The ball got lobbed into another court.

Now when a city official says, "If you vote for a 2-cent per-gallon gas tax, we'll restore the 50 percent funding we're planning to take away from the senior center," does this smell of political blackmail, too?

It seems to me the city uses rumor to get people fearful and running like lemmings. Rumor a few months back had OPEC cutting production and gas lines at the pump and prices going up.

A few years back there was the rumor of a Space Needle restaurant going in east of Sandy. Then there was the rumor of Sandy becoming a Bavarian-type village.

About two months back there was a rumor of the city buying the old Thriftway building, or building a new City Hall or building a new senior center on Langensand Road. It went from riches to rags in just two months. The lemmings ran again.

Now it was no rumor when a Sandy City Councilor told me the city employees had taken a pay raise in January.

Don't let a "yes" vote for a gas tax be politically blackmailed out of you.

Dorothy Bernard  
Sandy

### Senior Center helped newcomer

I came to Sandy last August from New York, a complete stranger except for my son, who lives just outside Sandy.

Soon after I arrived, I joined the Sandy Senior Center. There I found friendship and assistance in finding out the things a newcomer needs to know.

The most important of all was finding the little apartment on Hood Street, which I love dearly.

Eating meals alone becomes a lonely and tiresome procedure, but to eat in the company of friends is most pleasant. Food takes on a different aspect when eaten in genial company. I refer to the noon lunches.

You people at City Hall think twice before cutting the allotment to the Sandy Senior Center. There is no way to stop the aging process.

Anna M. Eberhard  
Sandy

### Where to write

State Representative Bob Shiprack, D-Dist. 23, 22610 Forest Park Rd., Beavercreek, Ore., 97004. 631-3817. Or: State Capitol, Room H288, Salem, Ore., 97310. 1-800-332-2313.

State Senator Bob Kintigh, D-Dist. 14, 38865 E. Cedar Flat Road, Springfield, 97478. 746-1842. Or: State Capitol, Room S310, Salem, Ore., 97310. 1-800-327-7389.

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) 1-800-452-7889.

Legislative access in Oregon: 1-800-327-7389. One may call this number and ask to be connected to any state legislator's office.

Oregon Legislative status number: 1-800-332-2313. One may call this number to learn the status of bills pending in the Oregon Legislature.

### 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.

by Adam Kraft

### Bobcats

