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Kindergarten a plus for youngsters

Committee lists academic advantages

by SCOTT NEWTON
Staff writer

Sandy children are at a disadvantage because the Sandy Elementary District does not offer kindergarten, members of a kindergarten study committee say.

Voters in Sandy will have an opportunity to add the program by approving a one-year levy in the mail-in election that concludes June 30.

Members of the Save Our Schools committee, a pro-education group, plan to sell the district's operating levy on the basis of the importance of kindergarten.

The four other elementary districts within the Sandy Union High School District offer kindergarten.

Pat Baker, a first-grade teacher at Firwood School who served on the kindergarten study committee, said teachers can observe local second- and third-graders and tell which ones have attended private kindergartens and which ones have not.

A booklet put together by the kindergarten study committee quotes example after example of the benefits of kindergarten. Two of the studies cited were conducted in Oregon.

A Tennessee Department of Education study shows that even in the eighth grade, students who had participated in a kindergarten program scored higher in math, spelling, and language and reading than those who had not.

According to information from the Oregon Department of Education, more than 93 percent of all 5-year-olds in the nation are enrolled in either public or private kindergartens.

Ann Marie Amstad, who has operated a private kindergarten at Immanuel Lutheran Church for 10



Photo by Scott Newton

Jeffrey Jones (left) and Jessie Moen decorate butterflies for an art project at a private kindergarten at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Sandy.

years, said kindergarten prepares children for the school routine. Not all children entering first grade can identify letters, write their first name, use scissors or follow a teacher's instructions.

The children who need the help the most are not getting it, in Amstad's opinion. The result is a cycle that often is difficult to break. "If everyone else can do something you can't do, you fall behind right from the start," said Amstad, a member of the kindergarten study committee.

"Kindergarten builds confidence," Baker said. "When we get children in the first grade, they come in at different levels. Some are ready to learn to read, some are almost ready, and some aren't even familiar

with their names. They can't tell an A from a B."

Having children enter school at a variety of academic levels slows the progress of the students who are ready to learn to read, said Baker, who has taught for 17 years.

Kindergarten will be mandated by the state of Oregon in 1989, but in March members of the kindergarten study committee recommended to the board of directors that they implement the program a year early.

The 10-member budget committee voted unanimously to include funding for kindergarten in the budget.

The kindergarten study committee, working under the direction of Firwood School Principal Judy Warren, began working on its study in

March 1986. The committee of seven was made up of teachers and parents.

In addition to summarizing numerous studies on the benefits of kindergarten, the committee looked at the mechanics of implementing the program.

It is expected there would be two rooms available at Firwood School for three sessions (morning and afternoon) of kindergarten, and one room at Kelso School for two sessions.

To make room for kindergarten at Kelso School, two classes of third-graders would attend school at Sandy Ridge, which is on Highway 211.

Warren said some parents had expressed concern about having their

children attend class at Sandy Ridge. Warren, who once taught at Sandy Ridge, said the small school setting offers an excellent educational opportunity. "I would tell parents it's the best we could do. It's wonderful."

At Sandy Grade School, there would be three sessions in two rooms. The problem comes in finding those rooms. Currently the only rooms available are a three-quarter-size classroom and a converted locker room. Both rooms are being used, one by a counselor and the other by a special education class and for other purposes.

Included in the funding for kindergarten is \$85,000 to add two classrooms onto the north wing of Sandy Grade School.

Kindergarten one factor in tax increase

Adding a kindergarten program would contribute to a jump in the tax rate in the Sandy Elementary District.

The tax rate will increase \$2.44 per \$1,000 of assessed property value, from \$7.90 per \$1,000 to \$10.34 per \$1,000, if voters approve a \$2.7 million one-year levy in the June 30 mail-in election.

Without kindergarten, a \$300,000 program, Superintendent Rex Hunsaker said he could have presented a budget with less than 6 percent growth. With kindergarten, the general fund increase approaches 12 percent.

Salary increases and an expected 3 percent decrease in district property values also would contribute to the proposed tax rate increase.

The primary expense of adding kindergarten is the hiring of five teachers at a cost of \$35,000 per teacher. That cost — \$175,000 — includes fringe benefits.

The kindergarten study committee recommended that the district hire experienced childhood education specialists. Hunsaker admits that they should be able to hire experienced teachers for less than the \$175,000 total.

"It is my feeling it will be less than that," he said. "But I don't want to not have enough. We don't waste money in this district. We proved a year ago we'll give it back."

In 1986, the Sandy Elementary District board levied \$100,000 less than voters approved because its cash balance was higher than expected. The action lowered the tax rate 33 cents per \$1,000.

Other expenses for kindergarten include an additional \$85 per day to bus children one way. With 177 school

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City Council to decide senior program's fate

The fate of senior citizen and recreation programs will be decided Monday when the Sandy City Council votes on the city's 1987-88 budget.

The budget attracted a lot of interest after the budget committee voted to eliminate \$56,735 in senior citizen and recreation programs.

About 80 people showed up to testify at a City Council hearing on May 18. Several citizens testified in favor of the senior citizens and recreation programs, saying the outreach services provided to senior citizens were valuable and that recreation programs help fight juvenile crime.

Some budget committee and council members said they agreed the programs were valuable, but said salaries were too high for people in those departments.

Budget committee members also were responding to pressure to build up the street fund. The money cut from the senior center and recreation programs was earmarked for the street fund.

The budget committee, which is made up of an equal number of city councilors and citizens, voted 9-4 in favor of adopting the budget.

The City Council does not have to abide by the budget committee's vote. The council's vote Monday is expected to be close.

Councilor correctly quoted wages at Council meeting

City Councilor Larry Buck was essentially correct when he said the director of community services and the director of the recreation department will be paid \$40,000 and \$25,000, respectively.

Buck quoted those salaries at a public hearing on the city of Sandy's budget May 18. Some people in attendance protested cuts in senior citizens and recreation programs.

Buck said he supported the programs but felt that too much was being paid out in salaries.

The Sandy Post reported Buck's comments in its May 21 issue, saying the two people make about \$3,300 and \$3,200 less than Buck said.

The salaries The Post printed were

incorrect because not all the retirement benefits were figured in. In addition, The Post listed 1986-87 salaries while Buck was talking about proposed 1987-88 salaries.

In the proposed budget, which the City Council is expected to vote on June 1, the salary of Sandra Potter Marquardt, director of community services, would be \$29,304, or \$39,333 with fringe benefits. Nancy Enabrit, recreation director, would receive \$17,832, or \$25,035 with fringe benefits.

Fringe benefits include medical, dental and life insurance, retirement benefits, and social security and workers compensation payments.

Pedestrian killed in accident

A Sandy woman died in an automobile-pedestrian accident on U.S. Highway 26 near Zig Zag on Memorial Day, according to the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office.

Vicki Lynn Neubauer, 33, of 39475 E. Gary St., died at Portland Adventist Medical Center of injuries suffered in the accident.

Neubauer entered the west-bound

lane of Highway 26 and was struck by a car, which threw her into the east-bound lane where she was struck by a second car. No citations were issued, according to the sheriff's office.

The accident occurred across from the Barlow Trail Inn at Zig Zag.

Neubauer was flown to Portland Adventist by Life Flight helicopter.

Man hooked on Datsun 510s

Import lover's friends say he's a hot rodder gone bad

by PHIL CHRISTENSEN
Correspondent

Most people would see a Datsun 510 for sale and see a 15-year-old imported family car. Ron Folck, who collects and customizes the cars, would see an automotive work of art just waiting to be restored.

"It's an enthusiast's car you can drive every day," Folck said of the simple, box-shaped design. To me it's a prestige car, it's an economy car, it's a traveling car.

"It's just a good, all-around car." If anyone would know, it would be Folck. The 49-year-old Alder Creek resident has owned five of the Japanese cars, with four currently in his possession. The gem among them has a Porsche engine in a 510 body. It was a gift to his wife, Diane.

Folck's interest in cars goes back to his teen-age years. He grew up in Portland in the 1950s and recalls working on cars and "cruising" Sandy Boulevard.

"My first job was in a wrecking yard. I used to cut up cars and put them back together. We would work on cars and chase girls; that was what you did in those days."

These days Folck works on Datsuns and enjoys them with Diane Folck, his wife of 26 years.

Folck, a gardener by profession, has owned all kinds of classic cars over the years, including a Porsche 240Z and a 1966 Ford Mustang, but it was during one financially lean time that he discovered the Datsun 510.

"About seven years ago, I needed an economical car and bought a 510 wagon for \$350. I fixed it up a little and Diane and I drove it to the coast. It broke down and I rigged it up to get back home on three cylinders."

He took the advice of an acquaintance who suggested he install an 1800 SX engine that had just been imported. "It went like a son-of-a-gun," Folck recalled. "I'd never seen a four-cylinder car go so fast. From that time on I was hooked."

Not only was he hooked, but he began to discover others were hook-



Photo by Phil Christensen

Rick Folck of Alder Creek organized other Datsun 510 enthusiasts into the Northwest 510 Owners Association.

ed as well. "I started meeting more and more people and seeing what they were doing with their 510s. I was really excited, but these people weren't organized."

Folck decided to organize them himself and in 1984 put together the Northwest 510 Owners Association. The first meeting was at Blue Lake Park that September. More than 30 owners showed up. Since then, the group has grown to about 100 members.

The Northwest 510 Owners Association meets once each month at Stark Street Pizza in Portland.

There also is an enthusiasts club in California called UFO, or United 510 Owners.

Folck has taken his share of ribbing over the hobby. He chuckles as

he relates that a friend and fellow car buff call him a "50s hot rodder gone bad" since he tinkers with imports instead of domestic cars.

Folck will have the last laugh, though. He currently is planning an engine that will add even more zip to one of his 510s.

"I'm building a Nap Z 4-cylinder 2300 using nitrous oxide to increase the horsepower." He grinned and added, "It will run away from just about anything on the highway."

Folck said that prices on the used cars, called "Bluebirds" in Japan, are going up as the number of available cars decreases. "The enthusiasts discovered them, but the kids bought them because they were cheap. They would fix them up a little, then get bored and sell

them. Enthusiasts are now buying them up faster than ever, if just for spare parts."

These enthusiasts are everywhere.

Folck described one friend with a small landfill who fills it with the "bones" of hundreds of 510s he has bought and stripped.

A 510 fan from the Midwest visited Portland with a truck and trailer in search of 510s. "They use salt on the roads during the winter, and all older cars are rusted out. This guy went home with two beauties."

When asked if Japan was still making cars as good as the 510, Folck said no.

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