

The Sandy Post

# Editorial & Opinion

Scott Newton, editor  
Karinda Hedlund, advertising representative

## School district uses results from tests

Most parents want their children to grow up in a place like Lake Wobegon, that imaginary community created by Garrison Keillor where the women are strong, the men are good-looking and the children have above-average intelligence. School officials must wince a little each year as they give achievement tests for fear some outside factor, such as the weather or a particularly filling meal served in the cafeteria, will result in a drop in test scores.

One school administrator told us that most schools in middle class communities test above the national average on achievement tests.

That would seem to be the case in Sandy, too, where students in the Sandy Elementary District and at Sandy High School scored above the national average in most areas.

Students in the Sandy Elementary District take the California Achievement Test. Students at Sandy High School take the Survey of Basic Skills.

College-bound high school students also take the Scholastic Aptitude Test. Local students tested above the national average on the language skills portion of the test, but tested below the national average on the mathematics portion.

However, math scores took a big jump in 1987. One counselor claims that is the result of constructive changes in the mathematics curriculum a few years ago.

While good scores on achievement tests are important, an issue of greater significance is what is done with these test scores. With that in mind, we are pleased with the recent actions of the Sandy Elementary District in general, and Ralph Branson, director of support services, in particular.

The district now has a committee, made up of staff members, that will evaluate test results each year and look for problem areas in the curriculum.

In some areas, for example, it is possible the district should leave the curriculum alone, even if subject matter is not taught in the same way it is presented on the achievement tests.

Such a difference could have an effect on student scores, but the district must decide what is more valuable — the information measured by the test or the district's own curriculum.

A more exciting prospect is that of finding problem areas among certain classes. Classes take on "personalities," according to Branson, with abnormally high or low skill levels in certain subjects.

After looking at two years of test results, the district should be able to pick up trends and adjust for them. For example, if a class seems to have a problem in one of the two math areas on the test, students would receive extra classroom help in that area. The CAT measures knowledge in 10 areas.

If the district is able to spot trends and correct them, it will have found the best possible use for the test.

Achievement tests, after all, should not be used strictly for comparison, although there is some value in that.

But if it can be used to better evaluate a district's educational program, that would be excellent.



## Dedicated workers rescue Silcox Hut

If Lew McArthur whispers history in my ear, I'll follow him anywhere. Even up the side of Mount Hood.

In truth, McArthur can't whisper at all. The quintessential Oregonian — sportsman, historian and builder — he has a voice that carries like a yodel. A good thing, too, because I could barely hear him over my panting and wheezing and creaking joints.

Unless they put a helicopter pad on the top of Mount Hood, I shall never see the view from there. A true flatlander, my idea of a tough uphill hike is a flight of stairs. But McArthur promised the members of the Historic Preservation League of Oregon, who were meeting at Timberline Lodge, that he would take it slow and easy on the way to Silcox Hut. I trailed along, just like the bear who went to the other side of the mountain "to see what he could see."

Two-thirds of the way up, my knees and lungs ganged up on the rest of my body, and, deciding there was no great crime in being a pantywaist, I hitched a ride on the first truck that came by.

I didn't know it either, but there is a road on Mount Hood above Timberline. It is used by the people who are restoring the 48-year-old Silcox Hut, an alpine-style warming hut one mile and 1,000 feet above the lodge.

You never know who you'll meet on



Sharon Nesbitt

the side of a mountain. The guy driving the truck was Don Foidel. Foidel is a retired builder from Brightwood who works only on jobs that he regards as a challenge. That's why he spent 71 days of his summer at the 7,000-foot level hammering and sawing away at a building that squats on the side of the mountain looking for all the world like a pile of rock with a roof on it.

Foidel is general contractor and chief volunteer to Friends of Silcox Hut. Calling it "Oregon's highest adventure," the hut's friends are people who have climbed Mount Hood, rested in the shelter of its rocky walls and decided it was a darned shame that the building was going to wrack and ruin. Once the upper end of the Magic Mile ski lift, the

second ski lift in North America, the hut was abandoned in 1962 when the Magic Mile was moved.

Three years ago the friends group was formed and started raising money. By next fall they hope to have it open for hikers, climbers and skiers. A bring-your-own-sleeping-bag hotel with a simple restaurant — a place to come in from the cold.

Foidel's old truck lurched to its accustomed spot in front of the hut. Without snow the front yard of Silcox Hut is kind of untidy. Mountains are always under construction. But beyond the glacial rubble of sand and rock is fold after fold of smoky blue hills. Sticking out of them, like a pyramid on the desert, is Mount Jefferson. It is enough to take your breath away, if you have any left.

Foidel has worked on a lot of high-toned places — Mauna Kea in Hawaii, Salishan on the Oregon Coast — but Silcox is the highest of all.

McArthur, who by that time had walked to the hut without so much as a ragged breath, joined Foidel in pointing out the beauty of Silcox. The bulky stone walls built with "studied carelessness," the carved beams covered with the graffiti of vandals, the "magnificently inefficient" fireplace.

Named for an early-day forest ranger with the unlikely first name of Ferdinand, Silcox almost didn't

make it to the restoration. There are jerks in high places, high altitude vandals, who repeatedly broke into the building and ripped the shakes off the roof to build fires.

Years ago a skier swiped one of the hand-wrought metal light fixtures and made off down the mountain with it. Guilt-ridden, he recently called Friends of Silcox Hut and promised to return it.

Next summer, after the snows have come and gone, there is a 1,500 pound stove to put in, bunk rooms to build, a caretaker's quarters to finish, bathrooms to be completed. The friends group figures it will cost about \$200,000, even with people like Foidel and McArthur donating their time.

"Even the ladies come up here to work," grinned Foidel. "But they don't want to wash windows or sweep up. They want to pound nails."

Many days Foidel is alone on the side of the mountain, with only the sound of his hammer. "I keep wanting to call this place my place," he said, a bit embarrassed.

Mountains and mountain places are like that. People want to claim this as their own. Some people do that by leaving their names scratched in hand-carved beams or taking something away. Other people do it by putting things back.

Friends of Silcox Hut are putting something back. People who want to help can call them at 297-2165.

## Letters to the editor

### Audience member backs Rodman

Being a resident of Boring, I received Dave Rodman's letter, and also the flier for the three year serial levy proposal.

Seeing discrepancies in the figures quoted, I went to the board meeting last week. While I do not have a college education, it only took one meeting for me to see what Mr. Rodman has been up against and why he felt he had to speak up.

Frankly, I am not impressed with what the architect or Mrs. Ida Cannon think about the roof on the Naas Building.

I want the estimates of two, or better yet, three qualified roofers, with facts and figures.

Mr. Rodman tried three times to find out what the full price of a bus would cost, but never did. When Mrs. Cannon was asked about the cost of the doors, she replied they would cost approximately \$2,500 each.

Well, I did not need my calculator to figure out that five double doors plus one single would come to more than the \$10,000 quoted.

Thank you, Mr. Rodman, for hav-

ing the courage to speak up. As for Mrs. Cannon's comment that Dave should keep his mouth shut, you should remember this, Ida: This is America, not Russia.

Mrs. Gladys Blake  
Boring

### Blood drive was successful

Congratulations go out to the many community members who helped support the blood drive at the high school on Oct. 13.

It was because of your time and patience that we were able to exceed our goal of 80 units of blood. We had 130 people pass through the commons and the Red Cross was able to collect 109 units.

I would like to express a special thank you to the many students and Elaine Hartney, Judy Bowman and Rose Merrill, who volunteered their time to help make the drive such a success.

Debbie Hunter,  
instructor  
Sandy High School

## Welches teacher went beyond duty

by PAULA WALKER  
Special for The Post

It seems to me that all our teachers deserve "kudos" lots and often. Throughout the seven years that my children have been at Welches School, they have received ample amounts of quality education mixed with a generous share of genuine affection.

This blend has provided an educational atmosphere in which they have thrived academically and emotionally.

We all expect a good education for our children but, for children to do their best, teachers must be more than just "rote pundits."

They must constantly and consistently display caring concern for each child in their charge; adjust to each child's unique needs; and attempt to encourage and motivate each child in ways that are pertinent to that particular child's mental and emotional development.

That is no small test in a full capacity classroom setting!

The reason I am writing at this time, however, is to recognize the particular efforts of one teacher — Tom Wells.

Last winter my son, Robbie, had a skiing accident in which he fractured his femur. As a result, he spent approximately two months in traction in the hospital, another three in a body cast, and was forced to miss the last months of school. He is just now regaining his normal gait and building back the muscle mass in his legs.

Shortly after school began this fall, Tom approached my husband to say that he noticed that although Robbie was improving rapidly, he lacked a full range of extension in the injured leg. Tom's concern was that, if left unattended, Robbie might habitually favor the other leg, which could ultimately inhibit his physical development.

His offer? If we didn't mind bringing Robbie to school a half an hour early three days a week, he would spend time working with Robbie to systematically strengthen and ex-

tend his leg. Now, mind you, I am well aware that the time before the morning school bell rings is always quite busy for the teachers. There is much to prepare and precious little time ever to get everything done.

And I want to draw particular attention to the fact that neither my husband or I solicited advice or help from Tom. Tom's offer was totally of his own volition, born of his own observation and concern.

The time he spends with Robbie is not remunerated in any way.

At a time when there is so much statewide upheaval over school budgets and the quality of education paid for, I want to make it clear that we are getting more than we pay for at Welches.

Tom was not asking for special recognition when he offered to help Robbie, and this isn't the first time that he has spent many of "his own" hours helping Welches kids out.

I distinctly remember that last year he transported all the potential soccer, volleyball and basketbal,

players to the Hoodland clinic for the mandatory physical required to participate in intramural sports.

Then too, many children have been taken care of long after sports events by Mr. Wells while waiting for parents who were late.

From time to time children who have participated in sports events, but did not have rides home afterward, have been chauffeured by Mr. Wells.

In the 'expected' aspects of his job, physical education and sports, you would be hard put to find a more encouraging, upbeat and motivating coach than Tom — to say nothing of his professional skills as a highly qualified physical education instructor.

His off-hours work with my son is, of course, especially close to my heart, but I have always had immense respect and admiration for Tom. I am proud to take this opportunity to share this with other members of the school and community.

by Adam Kraft

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### Bobcats

