

The Sandy Post

Editorial & Opinion

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Safety net reducing quality of programs

Safety-net financing, approved statewide by voters and implemented this school year, is adversely affecting the quality of education in the Sandy Elementary District.

The safety net allows districts to levy the same amount each year without seeking a vote of the public. It does not allow for growth or for districts to make up losses in revenue from the state or federal governments.

In the first year of the program, cuts were made in the Sandy library program. Librarians were taken out of the libraries at Kelso and Firwood schools, and the librarian at Sandy Grade School took over the operations at all three schools.

The change has not been drastic, but it has had a detrimental effect.

Classroom teachers now must teach library skills instead of allowing specialists to do that job.

While classroom teachers generally are qualified to teach a broad range of subjects, they are not as highly trained in the specific area of library skills. Someone who reads reviews and orders books, organizes the library and sets up the card catalog is more qualified to promote reading materials and teach children how to find research materials.

The change also has slightly increased the load on teachers. The libraries are occasionally closed in the district because no staff people are available to keep them open.

The prospects for next year, under safety-net financing, also are not encouraging. Three teaching positions and three maintenance positions are scheduled for elimination unless taxpayers approve a levy or tax base.

That could mean larger class sizes in the growing district. Also, the buildings in the Sandy Elementary District historically have been well maintained. But cutting the maintenance staff will not be without consequences.

Maybe that is what the taxpayers want — a clamping down on programs. But taxpayers also should be aware of what they are getting, and our observation is that cuts in the library have hurt the quality of education in the district.



'OUR EDUCATIONAL MISSION IS TO TEACH RESPONSIBILITY. ROLL THE PRESSES.'

Personally speaking

Task force member defends option

by PHIL JONSRUD
Special for The Post

There has recently been considerable effort on the part of several members of our community to have the Sandy City Council try to acquire the Stone building and move the library and police department there rather than to accept the task force recommendation to expand the present City Hall.

The task force report was such a brief statement of a complex issue that I, as a member of the task force, would like to attempt to outline some of the reasons for our decisions.

I believe that all the task force members would like to have recommended a new city complex that would have satisfied everyone's needs, but we recognized that Sandy has been through very difficult economic times and it was felt that if we can't pass a school levy election, we have no business buying additional property at major expense.

The following are some of the reasons we decided on City Hall expansion.

- We don't believe government should be expanding. Instead, they should "make do" with modestly expanded quarters.
- We don't believe taxpayers would pass a bond issue for buying additional property at a major expense. Expansion of the present building would eliminate the need for additional property.
- We don't believe it would be credible to have the City Hall used only by a small staff and have the library and police department moved to a different location.
- We believe that there is better supervision of departments if they are not scattered in different locations.
- We believe that the present location of the police department has been a deterrent to vandalism of City Hall and Meigs Park.
- We don't believe the prime commercial property should be taken off the tax rolls. Remember that the taxes exempted from any property purchased by the city would be an added burden to the remaining city taxpayers.

The Stone property is a major tax

contributor in the city and the loss of this over the period of a bond issue would be significant.

If the Stone property was purchased, not only would we lose the tax money, but choice property would not be available to a prospective commercial business, thus possibly further delaying the revitalization of the area.

City Hall was designed so that it could be expanded, and the building was located on property so that it could be expanded.

Acquiring another building would require the monthly cost of a phone system and other utilities, heat, maintenance and additional insurance on two buildings instead of one.

Cost estimates of the Stone building did not include money for the Bottono property.

We agree that parking is not the best at City Hall but if we are going to economize, people can walk an extra block or so. I frequently go to City Hall and I have rarely had to walk even half a block from my car.

Expanding City Hall will not take away any parking spaces.

At the time, I personally opposed locating City Hall where it is, but that is "water under the dam." The investment was made, and I think we should make the best of it.

The task force believed that the option to purchase the Stone building had some good features, such as good appearance, good parking, and the benefits to the general area of creating pedestrian activity, but after holding 10 meetings this summer and fall, we voted to recommend expanding City Hall.

My personal feeling is that the expansion of City Hall could be accomplished for considerably less money than is currently proposed, and I hope the City Council will find ways to do this.

The task force did not have time to try to do this. If the cost can not be cut considerably, I would not want to proceed with it.

If economic conditions improve in Sandy, and if Oregon changes its tax system so that school support is taken off the taxpayers' shoulders, then we can think about getting some of the amenities we can't afford now.

LETTERS

Stone building best for library

I would like you to strongly consider the Stone building for expansion of city services, specifically library and police.

As a member of the Policy Board of the Cooperative Library Network of Clackamas County, I studied the recently commissioned \$45,000 library planning report by HBW Associates, national consultants on library planning.

The chapter on site selection processes for local libraries suggests five key factors to be considered when acquiring sites for local libraries. They are:

1. Proximity to users at other activity places.
2. Visibility.
3. Accessibility.
4. Neighborhood compatibility and image.
5. Site size and suitability.

From my observations, the Stone site meets or exceeds each and every one of these guidelines. For these reasons, I urge you to consider this site.

In addition, using this building now has some unique advantages to the Sandy city core. If you wish to continue having a downtown, you must attract people there. Having a library located in the center of town will do this, helping to make adjacent sites more attractive to other small businesses.

Otherwise, considering the lengths of vacancy of the old Thriftway building, Grockett's and Buckboard Pizza (now occupied), adding another large vacant building downtown will turn it into a ghost town.

While not a city resident myself, being on the high school board of directors makes me extremely cognizant of total tax rates of our district's patrons.

I believe taxpayers in this area need relief, and in my opinion the least expensive site that meets the

five guidelines listed above is the only comprehensible choice.

Patty Klascius
Sandy

Students aren't taught basics

Your article on the high school "Prescription Learning Lab" on Jan. 14 was very positive and informative. However, I feel Superintendent Kent Heaton deserves more credit.

After all, it was Mr. Heaton who sold the program to the board. And convinced the teachers' union they should cooperate. If it wasn't for Mr. Heaton, it never would have happened.

Also, I think special comment is needed concerning the 120 students enrolled in the lab. These students are not enrolled in the lab because of learning problems, but because they weren't taught the basics in grades one through eight. I understand approximately 30 percent of the students entering ninth-grade are not prepared to work at that level.

Meanwhile, back at the grade school they are conducting a study on their quality program and maybe in 1989 or 1990 will make some minor adjustments.

Parents, if your student is getting good grades, check a little closer.

Last week a ninth-grade student helped me with a project. When it came time to pay for his labor, he told me seven hours. When questioned he recounted on his fingers and came up with eight, so I paid him for 8½, which was the correct amount of time.

Now, to add insult to injury, based on grades to date, this student will be on the honor roll by year's end. Isn't that great!

P.S. This student does not know geography any better than basic math.

John King
Affordable Education Association
Sandy

Grocer baskets in warmth of roast

He didn't wear his familiar green apron.

Except for a couple of years off for World War II and a few years sampling and rejecting retirement, Roy Meger has been a grocer for 57 years. The green wrap-around apron he wears is as much a part of him as his shy smile and the way the ducks his head. Or his funny habit of rubbing his hands together as he stands behind the counter of the Troutdale General Store.

It was part roast and part love feast Sunday when people told tales on Meger at the Troutdale Historical Society meeting. In honor of the occasion, Meger took off his apron and closed up shop for two hours. The society gave the grocer a historical marker to put on the front of his store. The marker tells how the business was started in Troutdale in 1891, how it sold everything "from buckets to Bull Durham." How Meger bought it in the 1940s after having been a clerk there since the age of 15. And then the marker adds something a bit unusual. It says, "Presented in 1988 to Roy Meger, who has sold his goods by lantern light in many a winter storm."

Heads bobbed in agreement when the tale was told about the 1968-1969



New Year's blizzard. Meger slept in his unheated store in order to be there for his customers. The power and the heat were off. He put the bananas in the insulated meat case to keep them from freezing. To keep himself from freezing, he layered sweaters under his green apron. But he failed to protect his ears and they turned a vivid purple.

Some people used to say that you knew winter was here when Meger put the chains on his car. Sometimes he would clank to work on bare pavement for weeks until the chains were really necessary. But their sound

was the sound of a promise. Roy would be at the store. Spring came when the chains came off.

They also used to say that you didn't amount to do anything in Troutdale until Roy Meger talked to you. Some people waited years for that honor. He hoards his words as though he has a limited supply.

The chatting is left to his sister, Elsie Simmitt, who takes her turn at the cash register.

There were lots of stories told Sunday. Sam Cox remembered the time he went into the store to ask Meger for a \$20 donation to help a Boy Scout go to camp.

Meger, usually a soft touch, resisted on that occasion. He had just been held up by a robber who stuck a finger in his pocket to simulate a gun. In addition to losing his cash to the holdup man, Meger showed Cox an extensive list of donations already made.

Cox, who has a certain reputation for persistence, argued a bit and then moved in for the kill: "I don't understand it, Roy. All I want is \$20 for a Boy Scout. And you won't give it to me when I know that all anybody has to do is come in here and stick a finger in his pocket and you'll give

him everythin' you've got."

Meger reached into the till and handed over the \$20, Cox reported smugly.

That same till used to contain watches that Meger exchanged for groceries with folks who were down on their luck. And it hasn't been that long since the store offered charge accounts.

"If it hadn't been for Roy, there would have been times when we didn't eat," remembered Edna Alexander.

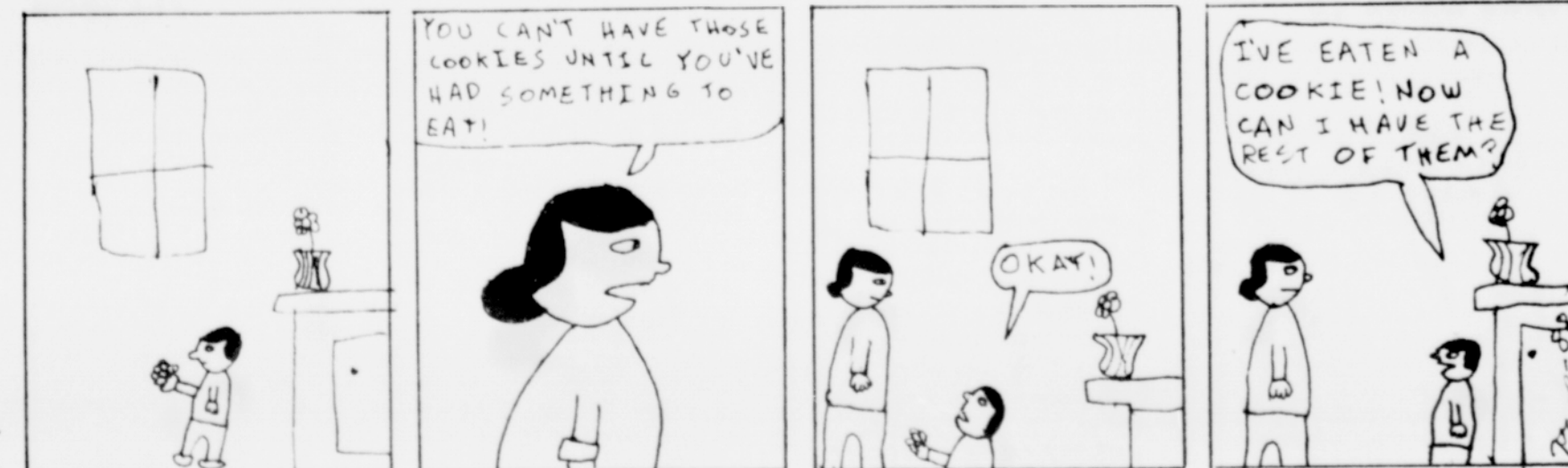
Ike Handy recalled the time his two young sons decided to run away from home. Meger obligingly sold them the things they needed for the trip and charged it to their father's account.

"I always wanted to thank you for the fine service you gave them," Handy deadpanned, remembering the night that half the community turned out to hunt for his kids.

Meger beamed and grew red in the face Sunday as people kidded and praised him. Then he spent a half-dozen precious words saying thank you and took his plaque back to the store.

He was there bright and early on Monday. In his green apron.

BOBCATS



The Sandy Post

(USPS 481-180)

MEMBER Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association, National Newspaper Association and U.S. Suburban Press
Published weekly Thursdays by the Outlook Publishing Co., Box 68, Sandy, Oregon 97055. Second class postage paid at Sandy, Oregon.

668-5548 SUBSCRIPTION RATES

In Clackamas County per year	\$ 9.00
Multnomah County	\$10.00
Elsewhere in Oregon	\$11.50
In Northwest and Pacific Coast States Outside Oregon, per year	\$14.00
Outside Northwest and Pacific Coast States, per year	\$17.00