

**THE FOLLOWING INTERVIEW WAS CONDUCTED ON BEHALF OF THE ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM OF THE CENTURY HIGH SCHOOL, THE INTERVIEWEE NAME IS CARNES AND BEAR, THE INTERVIEWER IS SARAH MERRICK THE INTERVIEW TOOK PLACE ON MAY 16<sup>TH</sup>, 2003 AT 11:15 AM.**

(Mr. Bear arrived later in the interview)

**Mrs. Carnes what is your background at Century and what has been your involvement or role this school year?**

I came to Century in 1998, which is the first year that we started the block schedule and I have taught Integrated Science for a couple of years and after that Biology and Anatomy/Physiology and then Health Services II. And Mr. Bear and myself have been developing the curriculum and everything else involving Health Services, CAM, focus program to study

**In general how has this school year compared to other years?**

Probably the aspect that has the most impact both professionally and personally have been the stress level and not knowing anything. It's really hard because communication has not been the best in this building, w/ that unknown element it's been really hard, I don't know whether to (unintelligible), but that has been the hardest, the increase of stress.

**So is that the biggest impact on the students and teachers?**

I think that sometimes we ignore that the way we're feeling has impact on our students in some ways, because we're all part of a community. I think that's often what we forget, and there have been times where I have actively had to tell myself "OK just shake it off", so that you don't impact the students as much.

**Who do you think are some key people that have affected Century the most this year?**

(Mr. Bear arrives)

Carnes: I was just telling her about how the biggest thing that happened this year, that most impacted me has been the stress level.

Bear: so you personally?

C: both professionally and personally I think the stress has really impacted.

**So Mr. Bear what is you're background regarding Century, and what has been you're involvement or role this school year?**

B: background with Century like when did I come here? I was on the original planning team and been here since and taught a variety of things but health and science some soccer and track and Mrs. Carnes and I together put the Health Services CAM together. Anatomy and Phys., among other things. What else did you ask?

C: you were also on psyche council.

B: yeah I was on psyche council for three years.

C: oh and I was on psyche council too, I forgot about that.

**What do you think have been the biggest events of the year? What do you think has impacted the students the most?**

B: positively or negatively?

**Both, at all.**

C: probably the shortened school year, I think more than anything is probably the seniors and I was just thinking the other day that this is their senior year, all of these things are supposed to happen and we traditionally expect them and some of the things have been totally eliminated and I think probably there is some mourning going on. Those people won't be able to add that to their memories. So I think that is really hard, and I also feel the juniors because their finally hustling to get things done and a lot of the students in advanced classes are not getting those pieces. Three weeks is a long time.

B: I agree w/ what you said but I look at a couple other things too, a combination of budget sort falls, a series of things, w/ the cut days, the teacher contract issue, we didn't have a contract until that long ago and then it was reopened and more days were cut and that affected students as well, the activities and everything, there's no way that can't effect the teachers. We're professionals and we want to do what's best for the kids. Those things affect us. The other thing is the week before school is out we're finding out where we're going to be teaching next year, w/ them opening up Liberty. There's three major factors that I think put this entire year that put it in incredibly high stress, and a lot of turmoil, and uncertainty.

C: and all that can be lumped into unknowns, so long we just didn't know about anything, and not knowing is hard.

## What was your initial reaction to Measure 28?

B: I think for a number of reasons professionally and personally I wanted it to pass because there would be less of a short fall, which would mean a longer school year and we can do what we're supposed to do better. A little side note w/ Beaverton school district and Portland they have some levies they're trying to pass to help for next year because next years not looking good either. I personally don't know if those are good things, because I fell like they're a short term fix, and I feel like our legislature needs to make some changes so that funding is not an issue like this, and I think that those just put off those serious issues longer.

C: I tend to agree w/ that, because what's happened as someone who has come here after that was that measure 5 that passed a few years before I came here and look to me that now they're doing these patches and mending things to accommodate the mistake they made by passing measure 5. So unless they go back and rethink that whole thing it's always going to be like this. And I'm the same way, for part of me was really sad but part of me said well maybe then it will give them the jump start they need to do long term, make long term decisions.

## How do you feel about the national coverage on Century?

C: I don't blame them, I thought the New York Times article was sugary they didn't get down and dirty, it was national exposure and probably the most negative aspect, would be that they stopped people from thinking that they should come here because Oregon has great schools, and is funded well.

B: in a short period of time Oregon has gone from a good reputation for schools, which attracts business, which helps the economy, and it's gone. If they don't fix it soon, the economy will get worse and business won't come, and leave the state of Oregon.

## How do you think these events have affected our schools spirit, and morale, and our involvement in the school? For example the canned food drive?

C: well we did well (anatomy/physiology class), and part of the reason for that I think that we were able to set aside our feelings of stress, sadness, and grief. I think there's been a lot of that this year, and that is why things weren't as spirited or came together, because people were grieving about a variety of

things the students and teachers, I don't think they were able to separate it and keep it out at all times.

Seniors

B: I think the seniors in particular are being short changed, and it's unfortunate because you graduate from high school one time and you're excited to do it and you're more than ready typically to graduate, and yet it's not happening the way it's supposed to, there's a certain way, a certain flow a certain timeline, so you can enjoy this once in a lifetime being a senior and moving forward in life and I feel like the seniors are being short changed.

**One of the factors in this grief was the Iraqi war; did you stay in touch w/ that?**

C: I have felt this has been one of the most difficult years in anything that I've done. And I chose to watch very little of the coverage and pretty much stopped reading the newspaper. But I just didn't need that extra stress so I chose to avoid it, and I don't know if that's again playing ostrich, and keeping my head in the sand but I just feel like to keep sanity and well being that I had to stay away and it's very sad and I think I would look at more of the impact that it had here, the economy which everyone thought it will jump start the economy because of this war, but it hasn't done anything except make me sad.

**How do you think it affected the students and teachers here?**

B: different ways, I think you cover the whole range of some people wanting to hide from the truth and not get totally overwhelmed w/ it and others who wanted the opposite and wanted to know everything and some of those are personal reason because they know people that are involved directly and I just think there's a huge range.

**How do you think the current issues have directly affected you?**

Teachers' Strife

C: directly, me personally? Well I'm looking for some work over the summer to pick up the slack, I've had a second job since last September and I'm scared for my families well being.

Teachers' Strife

B: you want to just talk about finances in particular, but there's so much beyond that, but that's apiece, that is a reality. This is our livelihood this is our profession as teachers, and when you have nine or ten percent of your income taken away because they're putting their short falls on the backs of the teachers, in essence that's a huge affect, and in my situation and there's many others too, where my wife and I teach in the same district, that's twenty percent cut in our family income. That is a lot. On the same end, this is what I try to keep telling myself, we do have jobs and there is a lot of people out of work and suffering a lot

more, and so I'm thankful that we have our jobs but it's frustrating when you dedicate your life to education and these types of things are happening. It makes want to think about am I doing the right thing. Because you have to provide for your family and that's most important.

Teacher's strike

C: the closest that I've come was one evening I was discussing the fact that I had signed up for my 3<sup>rd</sup> workshop and I hadn't been accepted for the summer because I do that all summer long, to stay on top of things. And I said it doesn't matter how terrible things get and how under appreciated I feel and how overworked that I feel and how underpaid I feel, I keep going on and w/o anyone patting me on the back I just have to do it by myself.

B: and the kids and the students help you with that, there are a lot of good students here. And if there weren't I think a lot of us, as teachers would just say forget it. We feed of as students and hopefully they feed off of us as well, in positive ways, that's why we do this. You have to try to ignore the negatives to a certain degree so you can focus on the positives.

C: there was a day I had to call home for a variety of reasons, and I decided if I was going to do that w/ a negative aspect, then I was also going to make the same number of calls with a positive. It was weird because there wasn't anyone home for the negative or constructive calls, but there was during the positive calls. That made me feel much better when I walked home that day.

**In your opinion who had been affected the worse by the events this year?**

B: that's hard, because I see it as two distinctly different groups, even though they meld into one. The students are one of the two groups, and the teachers and our income and lives, and being the best teachers we can be, which is hard because it's a continued process where we are asked to do more with less.

→ strike of Teachers

**How do you think this will affect following years?**

C: it's hard to say, because there is a lot of variables, people leaving to other schools, staff change, smaller population, a loss of extracurricular activities because of the cuts. I don't know its hard to say. I look it at, it's a new year, make it the best it can be and go in with a positive attitude.

→ Next year

B: you have to try, although its frightening because the budget forecast for next year is looking worse and worse, which means there are going to be more

budget short falls, more of the same of the this year if not worse. It's scary, on a number of different levels.

**If you were on the legislature what would be actions that you would take?**

C: well I know exactly, the formula they developed after measure 5, the point was to make funding equitable because there are some districts that just don't have the base. So what's happened in the process, because of special ed funding and a variety of other things, that there are some small rural districts that end up w/ almost 30 grand a student, and I think the average is 58 grand a student per year in Oregon. Now you're talking about some districts that have enough funding to go to Hawaii on a class field trip, and there are some here are really hurting because even though there is some special ed money coming in, it's a set amount per student, and some students require 78 thousand dollars worth of services and others require 3 thousand. So what they need to do is re work they're equations so that it's more equitable across the state, what they're finding is that people from rural areas are coming to more urban settings like Portland public schools or here so they can find the services they are not finding there, for the special ed kids. What I heard the legislature saying is, oh we really don't want to mess with it, and the reason they won't is because they don't want to make somebody mad and somebody won't vote for them later. But somebody has to make a decision, and so that's what I would do, change that whole formula.

B: people in legislatures say how vital good education is, and I agree with that, but I feel like they're just giving it lip service. And they need to literally put their money where their mouth is. Look at other countries, almost any other country you look at education and teachers are so much higher on the hierarchy of importance, and maybe there's something to be said for that. I don't have the answers if I was a legislator, but I think even though it may be highly unpopular, we need to look at a sales tax. Property tax doesn't seem to be working, providing funding not just for education, like elderly, that are under funded. If it's that important then they've got to change it. Like you said, I think they're afraid to make decisions, because they're primary concern is to be reelected.

**Is there anything else you'd like to add?**

B: the only thing I'd like to say is we're teachers for a reason we feel strongly about it, we understand the importance, hopefully we're good at it, we love to do it. This has been a very stressful year and next year will be difficult as well, and you have to remember why you're doing what your doing, for the kids, to help them become better contributing global citizens. And realize this too shall pass.

C: you also have to remember that we also are contributing members of society and there is no reason why we should not be able to work and live decently

B: we are highly educated people, that are kind of suffering financially and that isn't right.

C: people always say, you knew when you went into this business that you weren't going to make a fortune. However we did expect to be paid accordingly, the last statistic that I read is that given our most current education that we made twenty percent or some ridiculous number.

B: like a private industry our potential would be so much higher. And again we know that going into teaching, we're not crying because it's been that way. But when more and more things start being taken away: health insurance coverage, less income those types of things that's not what we signed up for.

**How do you think would be an affective strategy to help it? Like student action?**

B: I think through this whole process whether you're talking about budget short falls, or teachers not having contracts for most of the school year all the different things, I feel our Hillsboro community did not get upset, was not informed well enough, until just recently. And even then I think it's been very mixed, I think we got to get the community involved more, and any kind of student and community things need to be positive, and constructive. We do have power, if we unite. Meaning yes one person can try to make a difference, but when you get another and another and get big groups of people you can make a difference. We are the ones who vote for and elect our leaders.

C: what I think is really cool about SAFFE is that it's very student driven, I think that's important. It's a great lesson for the public to see these well informed articulate high school kids. We say this all the time, the general public is afraid of you guys, they just don't know, they think all these teenagers, and I say hey, they are miss understood, and there are a lot more "good ones" than "bad ones"