

Leonard Girard

I am no expert on political matters but it seems to me that candidates promise many things during campaigns. Once elected, they face the not very secret reality that they can't deliver on all of their promises, representations, hopes and dreams. It seems to me that their decisions are substantially based in significant part on "What is my base, who actually votes, and who donated how much to my campaign?"

This may explain in significant part why, for example, people of color, the homeless and other constituencies have not fared well over the years.

Some of you have talked of our terrific leaders during the past. Please ask yourselves, what have these leaders accomplished to make the Portland Police Bureau accountable for the conduct of some of its members. Which leader hired an anti gay chief from the then notoriously militaristic Los Angeles Police Department. Also ask, why did the Obama Justice Department conclude that the Portland Police Bureau had used excessive force in dealing with people with mental issues? Also ask, why did data in the early part of this decade show that black drivers and pedestrians were stopped by Portland Police at a rate two to three times higher than other groups? Ask your black friends, workmates and others what their experiences have been.

I hope that our new police chief Ms. Outlaw receives the political backing to cause reform and accountability in the department. This may require the Mayor and Council to show heretofore missing backbone in contract negotiations.

I agree with the discussion that the homeless are a very diverse population. Have any major cities had any success in addressing their issues? Do most other cities have homeless hanging out on the sidewalks and camping or trying to camp in neighborhoods and along roadsides?

I was very surprised that there has been so little discussion about education. I assume that all of us are aware that Oregon is 47th or do worst in the United States in the rate of high school students who graduate at the same time as the other students with whom they started the ninth grade! Please note that this does not show Oregon's rate of graduation for students who continued in school after not graduating with their twelfth grade class.

I take no pride in our state being worse, yes worse than, among others, Mississippi! By the way, data seems to support that Oregon is below average but not near the bottom of expenditures per student. All of this is despite the fantastic contributions of Rudy Crew.

Although my mother and both daughters and first wife were teachers. I don't claim to be an expert on teaching. What I do know based on many years working with our Dream program at King School, Tubman Middle School, and Jefferson High School is that the quality and ability of

teachers covers a wide gamut. At King, there were four fifth grade teachers. Three of the four were fantastic. You would be eager to have your children or grandchildren taught by them. The fourth teacher was absolutely a failure at planning, preparation and classroom teaching. At Tubman the science teacher and a journalism teacher met the above high standards. In contrast, another teacher's classroom was a disorganized chaotic educational disaster. A reasonable process for rewarding excellence and addressing deficiencies did not and does not exist.

I assume that the failures of our educational system contribute in a not insignificant way to both crime and homelessness. We need accountability and responsibility for our educational system.

Each and every member of our group enjoys what is crudely described as "White Privilege".. Many, if not all, of us received from our parents significant natural abilities and support and encouragement for our educational development. We should feel embarrassed or ashamed at our good fortune. We must, however, do what we can to help find ways to support those who were not as lucky.

This will require massive and difficult efforts to try and develop a political and economic process that provides accountability, responsibility and offers real opportunities to all and rewards citizens, politicians, businesses, government and NGOs who produce thoughtful and effective results consistent with a healthy and sustainable environment.

Sadly, I am not optimistic that these efforts will succeed. How optimistic are you?