

Gary Morton Interview @ 7:30 am on 5-20-03

What's your background in century?

M: I was on the planning team. Picking colors and all that stuff, picking names- I wanted the sharks but they voted that down. Started out teaching AP English and that's pretty much it.

How does this school year compare with others you experienced?

M: It's Horrible. Because of the seventeen days cut. I lost 5 thousand dollars of salary which nobody seems to care about except certain people but not very many people. And it's been real turmoil and I'd hate to think what's coming. So this year has been pretty bad just because of the cut days so it forces you start scrambling at the end of the year-try to figure out what you want to do because it's never happened before. We've always had a finals week and everything comes to a closure, not happening this year...the kid's have been good.

What for you has been the high point of the school year?

M: I guess just getting out of here. Retiring. That's not really a high point-it's something I'm trying not to think about. It's important to me to finally get it over with... maybe working with sanders, she's kinda bozo...having a parallel class where we teach English and social studies together. Other than that, nothing.

How would you describe moral among faculty this year and administrations?

I can't speak for administrators because I never deal with them. Students, I don't know, but teachers, really low. Some people are going to liberty who didn't want to go. Some people are going to hill high, Thomas junior high, getting transferred. And all the apprehension about who's going, who's staying, and who's getting cut. We're losing teachers...they're losing their jobs. Teachers who haven't been here for two years. So the moral's pretty low. It's not been fun in that sense. It's all we talk about, is teachers.

What do you see as the impact of cutting 17 days.

M: I don't think 17 days makes any difference in the way I teach or what we teach. 'cause we teach a process of analysis and we could do that in 3 months. But I think it hurts the other teachers who have timelines. Science, they don't get to certain units, history, the end-of-the-year project got cut, just kind of an update now. It affects teachers who have knowledge to teach, I'm just teaching a process. I don't think anybody's gonna miss 17 days of this class. I think the 17 days has messed us up at the end. Some people are scrambling and running around and squeezing everything in and kids are feeling the pressure-"why do I have all this work at the end?" I don't think that solves anything, they should just continue on and stop. I don't know that cramming it all in proves

anything. But it's been tough for people who teach knowledge and statistics and all that brain stuff.

What do you think has been and will be of the national coverage?

M: I don't know. People everywhere are laughing at us but it doesn't seem to solve anything-nobody seems to want to do anything about. Legislature met 5 times to try to solve school funding and they ended up with a 3 day baseball proposal. So it's embarrassing nationally that people are worried about us and wonder what Oregon's doing. But Oregon's not doing anything. I don't think it makes a bit of a difference. Locally, people are just-"oh that's too bad".

What's the whole problem with PERS?

M: well, measure five and some other stuff cut the taxes on corporations. Some corporations paying their fair shares are paying far less. So somebody has to pay for it. And it seems like it's always the teachers...and the firefighters and the policemen that end up having to take the burden. I'm very upset and that's one of the reasons why I want to get out because they're gonna change PERS and it's not just new people coming out-they're gonna try to change the new people coming in there, and I think that that's absolutely ridiculous. So PERS is messing up a lot of people. We're losing 70-70 people retiring in the district-not replacing any of them. So PERS is a problem and I just want to get out while I could. Because they may change it, so I'll lose thousands of dollars and I think it's totally unfair. I don't know how my teachers are gonna have take the burden.

So if it weren't for the whole PERS situation would you teach more?

M: I don't know. It's hard to answer that. Because it is happening...I might have stuck around. I was thinking of getting out and staying on a separate contract where they write it up...weird...where they call double dipping. They take your PERS and they also pay your salary for teaching. Which some people kinda like to. It just sped up the process. But there's gotta be a last year. And it has to come sometime and the district is really reluctant to give that separate contract because they're laying all these people off and they can't just justify it so that's when I decided. Next year will be tough...your going to see a lot of changes. You might not have school the way you're used to. A lot of big classes coming. That's one of the problems with this other few days- they cut that and they try to hire more teachers, they can't do it. So you'll start seeing 42-44 students in a class.

What programs would you personally cut?

M: That's an either or question. I wouldn't cut either one of them. You can sit here and criticize people for making those decisions. I'll tell you this, I wouldn't cut peoples salary. I would not cut days off. I heard on tv last night talking about -well why don't we cut some more days and keep band and blah blah blah. Yeah, I'd rather cut people and teachers and just not rehire them and keep all the days and keep all the money in the

pocket of people who are teaching than cut programs. I don't wanna see band, music anything go. Why don't we just cut math? If you cut math and science and English and history, people won't wake up. But we don't do that. We always cut the stuff out there in that the community sees. But if we cut the core stuff-we couldn't take an AP test, would not prepare you for anything-then they might start waking up. I don't know. That's an either or question and I don't know if I can answer it.

Of the retirees, who do you feel will make a lasting impression on the school.

M: Nobody. You know what? When you think about this, the only people who know a teacher are the ones they have that year. So nobody knows the teacher as freshman, sophomore, unless they're in drama or foreign language and math. One year go by and they'll never remember who that person is. That person will never mean anything to anybody coming up. So there's no lasting impression ever for anything. There's no lasting... nothing. You can call this place Barnekoff Auditorium, there are kids "who's that?" I doesn't matter, tombstone or cemetery...it means only to the person who knew them, after that it means nothing. And that's the sad part about living is that once you leave, you're irrelevant. Totally irrelevant. So there is no lasting impression, ever. It's only for the people who've actually had that person, and maybe remembered some cool stuff that happened in class-that's the only part that's remembered. The rest of it doesn't mean anything. I'm just a realist. I think that's true and you can just go ask people. I talked to Mary Cural May, a woman who retired at Glencoe. Gerry Ford! I mean he's a cool guy who cares?
So we've got people that retire and then...school goes on. It's a different place.

What do think has impacted students the most this year?

M: well I saw the survey from Heather McCambly... I noticed the 17 days. Some kids said the Iraq war and all this. But I think the 17 days really upset people. Kid's were used to going to school, getting their moneys worth...still I think they're getting cheated. I think the 17 days is the biggest impact because it...we didn't know if was going to be every Friday whether it was going to be...well, we'll go to school four days a week, kinda stretch it out. But they just cut it all off at the end and I think that big chunk of 17 days...but again, next year, no body will ever remember, and well move on like normal. I think it really hurts the juniors and seniors...the most.

Anything else you want to mention?

M: of all the teachers in this school, I think Duyckink is the queen...I do. (in between comments). No, I want her to know that. I would tell her that. There are people I see grading papers, planning things, working on the computer, getting research... she just never stops...trying to make this year important.