



METROPOLITAN SERVICE DISTRICT
527 SW. HALL ST., PORTLAND, OR. 97201 - 503/221-1646

Mike Burton
COUNCILOR
DISTRICT 12

February 10, 1982

The Editor
The Oregonian
1320 S. W. Broadway
Portland, Oregon 97210

Dear Sir:

Shades of Clark Kent! The Oregonian's editorial on "MSD buck-passing..." is the kind of hard hitting journalism that demonstrates the true in-depth efforts made by the paper's editorial board in routing out the real problems of Metro's management.

As a "seasoned observer" of Metro, I was thrilled to learn that the Council's problem was "rooted in the first meeting of the council" when it split, 6-6, over the election of a Chairperson. Your editorial states the split reflected that "Half the council wanted a strong legislative body, the other half wanted to support a strong executive." This keen insight was not made at that time, in fact, your comment about the coin tossing at the time was a petty remark without any substance (as one of your editors later remarked to me).

Only once in three years have I seen an editor of The Oregonian at a Metro Council meeting. In fact, it was seldom that I saw an Oregonian reporter at a Council or Committee meeting. On one occasion, the editorial column chastised me for a strong position I took--incorrectly interpreted what action I had taken in Council. No Oregonian reporter was present at that meeting. I called one of your editors to complain and was told the editorial board did not get its information solely from its reporters and I could always "write a letter to the editor" and I did but it was not published.

Now, with ouija-like precision, the editorial asks of the Council "Where has it been these past three years?" Well, it has been right here debating, voting and splitting on issues 7-5, 5-7, 6-6, 1-11, etc. Your concern that "only

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five of the 12 council members" attended a press conference on February 3 to outline proposed fiscal controls seems to argue that all 12 Councilors must always agree on each issue. Tell me one legislative body that continuously achieves perfect unanimity. Perhaps, in its olympus-like setting, the editorial board of The Oregonian does operate this way. The Oregonian, until recently, has been lazy in its coverage of what the Metro Council does; this reflects its protective interest in the Executive Officer.

After considerable Council debate, without any news coverage of the matter, one of my colleagues and I met with one of your editors about our concern over the management of Metro and the lack of coverage in The Oregonian. We were told by that editor that "we (the editors of The Oregonian?) have a great deal of confidence in Mr. Gustafson...." so, perhaps, rather than asking where the Council has been for three years The Oregonian editors should ask themselves where they have been for the past three years.

Very truly yours,

Mike Burton, Councilor
District 12

MB/gl