

Interview with Terry Shlaes: May 16, 2003
(AP History class project)

JN: What is your background regarding Century, what has been your involvement or role during this school year?

TS: I came to Century the second year that it was open, I'm a special ed teacher and I'm the department coordinator for the special ed program however I've been primarily teaching these last few years science classes and in particular the last three years on teams for ninth graders. The last two years we've done the Jag Fest Team which has been an integrated ninth grade team with, Math, Science, Social studies and English classes. The year prior to that, three years ago Mrs. K and I did a Science, Math integrated group thing, so a lot of science.

JN: In general how does this school year compare to other school years that you have experienced?

TS: If this year has been a traumatic year, I've taught over 25 years and I've never had a year where funding has been an issue midway in the year. I've been in districts where there's budget cuts but it happens in the future year so we would plan for it and things but for things to happen the way it did this year it has been a first; where we cut this many days in the school year, where we are doing major cuts to staff and all the turmoil with the schedule and a lot of things.

JN: How have all of those events affected you personally?

TS: It's been a little more stressful year, there are a lot of things out of our control there were a lot of things that we wanted to do with our team this year that we couldn't because of budget constraints. I think overall the feeling the morals have been low for staff than in years previous and I think it's the not knowing what's going to happen in the future that has probably affected a lot of the teachers.

JN: Was there anything that you did that tried to boost that staff moral?

TS: Yeah, I serve on the social committee for the staff so we planned a lot of social activities and a couple of weeks ago I did a cooking class at ^{Sur le Table} (unintelligible) for the staff just again a way to get away and just have fun. And try not to think about the things that were sort of out of our control.

JN: What has been the highest point of the school year?

grants TS: Well there were a couple good things that happened this year, this year I managed to get three grants for my science classes and one was a pretty big one; one was a \$250.00 grant from Aerospace Foundation, then I got a Fred Meyer shopping grant for \$1000.00 then the big one that I found out about this year was the Toyota Tapestry grant which was a \$10,000.00 grant. That was one that I've been trying for four years to get and finally on

the fourth try I got that. So I was real excited and pumped about that and unfortunately some of that may be affected by the changes in staffing and the budget cuts here.

JN: So does that money go to your department or does it go to the school?

TS: It goes to the school to be used for my science classes, I submit a specific project and the project was on bridge building, which was a new project for us this year.

JN: How would you describe the moral of the faculty, students and administration this year?

TS: Today has been a bad day for a lot of the staff; today was the day where the staff finds out where they're going to be next year. So anticipating that this day was sort of coming has been hard I think for a lot of people.

JN: Is today a good day for you?

TS: It was a good day for me, I kind of knew. But there were a lot of people that were in my department and things that were affected by the changes so it's not a good day for them.

JN: During times like this what would you do to make yourself feel better or boost your moral?

TS: The people in our North Two Ten office, we've gone and done social things outside of school. To help get away and enjoy each others company and not think about school.

JN: So in a way the events of this year have brought you guys closer together?

TS: I think so, yeah, one of the comments that one of the teacher's talked about was the fact that they felt they could come to our office group and talk about their concerns about not knowing what's going to happen next year and the things that might happen to them and they couldn't explain that same thing to their family because we understood the school system.

JN: What

TS: Budget cuts, definitely, it's affecting everything.

JN: Who are some key people that have made a difference at Century this year and what have they done?

TS: Well, I think ^{Site} Ken Struckmeir as the psych council chair, has been a good leader, as well as the administrators they've had a tough year I think sometimes they take the brunt of the blame when things happen when people don't want to happen but really they have to deal with what the district office tells them to do, they have to work within those

constraints. I think those are the people that probably had the hardest year because they had to take on the responsibilities then break it to the rest of the staff.

JN: What do you think Century is known for within the community of Hillsboro?

TS: I don't live in Hillsboro but when I spoke to the parents, they consider it a good school. I still hear that, there are quality teachers and the programs are great programs and things, and for the most part most of the families like that their students are going to Century so it's still a positive note yet.

JN: What do you see as an impact of losing seventeen days of school?

TS: A loss of curriculum and not being able to teach a lot of concepts that I normally teach in my classes. That would probably be the most major thing, having to just say, ok, I'm not going to teach a whole unit of things. And having to prioritize what I do teach, especially for my students who go onto Biology they have to build on the skills they learned from the integrated science. So I have to make sure since I teach both classes that at least I know what they need to have. It's been hard on the students because they have to cram so much before they leave.

JN: So what have you cut from your curriculum this year?

TS: In my integrated science class I took out most of the earth science is gone, I mean it's a whole month of school, other things we touched a little bit some basic rock and mineral things. But we never had time to discuss any of the other stuff.

JN: How do you feel about continuing on the block schedule for another year?

TS: I love the block schedule, you know I serve on psyche council and so we knew that it was a positive thing for students and I don't think anyone disagrees with that. The disagreement with the votes this year was on teaching the number of classes that we were teaching, as far as the positive effects with block, as a science teacher it's wonderful, we can discuss things and go do lab then come back and rediscuss before they leave.

JN: What were your thoughts about the change in the schedule?

TS: Definitely panic, having to rethink all the labs that I do because all my labs depend on 90 min. schedules.

JN: What do you think has been and will be the impact on national coverage that Hillsboro School District has received this year?

TS: I went to a national conference in Pennsylvania in March and I expected to hear more about it, because at that point we had already had some publicity on it, but no one was like well I heard in Oregon so I think education in general is in crisis and everyone

all the teachers that I talked to from other states seem to express that, we're just kind of in the extreme at this point.

JN: Do you think a war in Iraq has had an impact at CHS and if so what has the impact been?

TS: You know we talked about it in our office and kids may have asked a few questions but I think that it's still far removed enough, and I don't know if it's because I teach all freshmen, but it didn't come up very much, and I think in our team and in our SS class they discussed it a little bit and it was part of the MUN project. In my classes not a single question.

JN: Has it affected you?

TS: No, not directly, I mean a sort of disappointment that we ended up being in a war, I'm old enough to see some of this happen over the years, I think at this point we were so much in crisis about our immediate concerns here at Century thinking about a war thousands of miles away didn't really affect me personally, I don't anybody that has gone and as far as I know I don't have any students who have family members that have gone.

JN: How would you describe the school spirit this year?

TS: I've been to all the PEP assemblies and the kids seem to enjoy all the competitions and everything, it seems like all the activities have continued on.

JN: Do you think there's been a difference in previous school spirits?

TS: Well, I'm an advisor for Key Club and I'd say that this year was actually better than last year as far as students participating in community service we do the giving tree and other groups getting involved with the giving tree and the NW Medical Team. People were a lot more willing to give this year; we got a lot more donations. I had more members in Key Club than in years previous. We had a lot of people out of the community this year wanting to help.

JN: If you could change anything in the school your what would it be?

TS: Better funding.

JN: What was your reaction when measure 28 didn't pass?

TS: I wasn't surprised typically Oregon Voters just don't support an increase in tax. The fact that we don't have a sales tax after all these many years tell us...I saw a pole the other day that if they brought up the sales tax that 50% of the voters would say no.

JN: What solutions do you think could lead us out of our current situation?

TS: Unfortunately taxation, I mean I don't know how else you would pay for all the services without generating income. You can't avoid it.

JN: Whether you agree or not with the budget cuts, how do you think they should be done? I mean, what should be cut and what shouldn't?

TS: I think the direct services to the students should be the last to be start, I think buying textbooks, and opening new schools shouldn't be done until we have the funds to do that.

JN: What kind of precedent do you think this school year will set up for the future?

TS: Well, I talked to the state and they allow them one time to do these cuts where they're below what the state requires.

JN: Is there anything else that you would like to add that we didn't cover?

TS: That about covers it.

JN: Thank You!