Mayor Bud Clark

Portland, Oregon

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For CMPSCI 105

October 1, 2001

In early 1992 I read an article in the Boston Globe newspaper (with a by-line of Stuart Wasserman) about the then-mayor of Portland, Oregon, a rather eccentric fellow named Bud Clark. As someone who had grown up in Oregon myself I was aware of Bud Clark's rather unconventional tenure as mayor, as well as some of his other exploits, and was delighted that the Globe had run a personality piece on the man.

At the time of the Globe article, Clark was nearing the end of his second term as mayor, and was not planning to run for reelection because he had done everything he set out to do and all that he had promised at the time he was first elected. Afterwards he was planning on returning to his previous occupation: owner and innkeeper of the Goose Hollow Inn. What the Globe article found remarkable was that after seven years in office, and with only one year left in his administration, he still owed $71,000 in campaign debt. This was given as further proof that he had to have been that most rare of creatures, an honest politician. A campaign started by a local columnist to send "bucks to Bud" reduced that debt significantly.

In his first election, Clark soundly defeated his opponent, incumbent mayor Francis Ivancie. Ivancie expected to win easily, as Clark had entered the race late and as a dark horse contender designed to protest some of Ivancie's policies. Despite his inexperience, only four months after formally entering the race Clark beat Ivancie by 13 points.