

## EX ALDERMAN NEWSLETTER 121



March 24, 2014

By John Hoffmann

**DALTON CONTINUES TO LIE ABOUT THE BUDGET;** It is time for the first Town and Country newsletter of the year...that means it is time for Mayor/Cigarette Lobbyist Jon Dalton to lie about the condition of the city's budget.

In Dalton's "State of the City" he uses six pages giving himself a pat on the back. It always reads more as a campaign flier than a city report.



This March a headline on page 4 screams, "**Another Balanced Budget: Our Fiscal Position Remains Rock Solid.**" **This is an out and out lie.** The 2014 Town and Country Budget started the year with a \$857,320 deficit. By March that deficit increased to \$982,320 thanks to an additional \$125,000 need for snow removal.

As usual Dalton claims the city budget is balanced because the General Fund portion of the budget has \$35,000 in reserve. However, the Road Fund, Capital Improvements Fund, Parks and Storm Water Fund and Safety and Training fund are all deeply in the red. The budget consists of all five components.

**THE 2013 LIE:** In the city newsletter that went out in March of 2013 Dalton's lie was even a bigger whooper. He used the same headline of : "**Another Balanced Budget: Our Fiscal Position Remains Rock Solid.**" However the budget presented by Dalton and approved blindly by the Board of Aldermen started with a \$2,427,890 deficit. That is a lot of red ink.

Dalton's "balanced General Fund was \$14,020. He managed this by placing such day to day operation costs as gasoline and utility bills under the Capital Improvements Budget. Tell me is putting gas in your car or paying the electric bill a capital improvement at your house? It sure isn't at mine.

To make matters worse Dalton had been putting off regular annual street maintenance for several years and bit the bullet by adding \$2.6 million more to the already large deficit budget in 2013 to do street repairs that should have been done three years ago.

That shot the 2013 budget deficit in excess of \$5,000,000. Dalton had the balls to brag that the budget came in under estimates by saving \$547,000. Luckily some road construction costs came in under estimates. In reality in 2013 Dalton started 2013 with a \$2.4 million deficit and ended the year with a \$4.5 million dollar deficit. Dalton managed to tell the residents what a great job he had done. He lied!

The Finance Commission is not buying what is happening as a positive thing. They demanded that Dalton raise the minimum reserve on hand from 20% of the budget to 40%. They didn't say they didn't trust Dalton's handling of the money...but they didn't need to.

Dalton wrote in the newsletter that at the end of the year the reserve will be at a healthy \$12,200,000. However in 2009 we started the year with a reserve just hitting \$20,040,000. **In the last four years under Dalton the city has lost 39% of its cash reserve.**



Jon Dalton discussing the 2014 and 2013 budgets at neighborhood associations.

**FIRE STATS FINALLY ARRIVE:** We made a very simple request of the West County EMS and Fire Protection District back on February 20, 2014. The request was how many calls did they have in Town and Country and how many district wide in 2013.

You would think they would know how much work they did. That might be important for figuring out budgets and equipment maintenance schedules.

**Here is the amazing thing...they didn't know.** They hadn't been maintaining this information. Instead the Central County E-9-1-1 Dispatch Center would supply this information on a monthly basis. When the dispatch center suddenly was swamped when they began dispatching for three times as many fire departments and districts in 2013 after they took over for dispatch centers in North County and South County...they quit providing this information to WCEMS&FPD and the Fire District and the City were not asking for it.

It took 21 days for the fire district to provide me how many calls they answered in 2013. It is amazing that City Hall pays \$3.6 million in bills for EMS & Fire Service without getting a monthly report of what they are receiving in services.



Calls declining: The fire District had a total of 4,991 EMS and fire calls in 2013. Of those 1,801 or 36% were in Town and Country. 1,393 or 77% of the calls in T&C were EMS/ambulance calls. That comes out to 3.8 ambulance calls a day. That number has been holding steady since 2005. It also represents the most ambulance calls per fire station per day of the three fire district stations.

This means the ambulance at the Town and Country fire station is in service from Town and Country calls 20-hours a day. \*There is always a chance it could be assisting on a call outside of Town and Country.)

The 408 fire calls represent 01.1 calls a day. That is down from 1.8 calls a day in 2005.

In 2006 when the command staff and the board of directors were attempting to annex Town and Country into the District instead of serving through a contract, they claimed they needed a second house in T&C as calls would be going up in the years to come.

At the time of the annexation attempt Mayor Jon Dalton failed to tell residents that he had been on the fire district's payroll a year earlier as a lobbyist. At first he did nothing to try and stop the annexation as the fire district got it set on the November 2006 ballot. However, by August when citizens figured out their taxes would go up hundreds or thousands of dollars the opposition became so intense that Dalton did get the District to withdraw the ballot proposal. Prior to that time Dalton never publicly complained how the fire district was having uniform firefighters going door to door with petitions.

Here are the breakdown of calls for 2013 by Ward:

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Ambulance EMS</b>	<b>Fire Calls</b>
One	347	142
Two	184	74
Three	261	71
Four	601	131

The reasons for 347 EMS and 142 fire calls in Ward 1 is because portions of I-64 and all of I-270 in the city limits plus a major interchange are all in Ward 1. Also the high number of medical offices around Missouri Baptist Medical Center result with a high volume of ambulance calls. A person could be at a doctor's office located directly across the parking lot from the ER at Missouri Baptist. If the doctor feels they need to go to the ER a fire district ambulance is called.

The huge numbers of EMS calls in Ward 4 are due to the fact that there are two nursing homes/assisted living facilities, a major university, a large number of office buildings, a hotel and a several mile stretch of I-64 are all in the ward.

Ward 1 and Ward 4 have higher numbers of fire calls because they have more multi-story buildings that generate the highest numbers of false fire alarm soundings.

Ward 2 has the lowest fire and EMS calls for two reasons. It has the least amount of interstate highways, no medical or nursing home facilities and the large high school in Ward 2 is run by the Christian Science Church, a group of people who do not believe in medicine and will not be calling for ambulances.

**POLICE ACTIVITY FOR FEBRUARY:** Unlike the Fire District town and Country Police Chief Pat Kranz knows what his department has done last year and last month. Here are the February activity stats:

- 65 Auto accidents
- 32 Criminal reports (vandalism, burglary, theft...etc.)
- 19 DWI arrests
- 43 Other arrests 2-burglaries plus Failure to Appear, minor drugs, minor thefts...etc.,.
- 458 Traffic citations (317 speeding)

**WARD FOUR CANDIDATE REFUSED ALL LOBBYIST GIFTS WHILE ON STATE REP'S STAFF:** Linda Rallo running to unseat Phil Behnen in the Ward 4 aldermanic race had spent three years in Jefferson City on State Representative Cole McNary's staff. She did something her boss found hard to do. She refused to accept any lobbyists free food, drinks or gifts. If she was reported having received anything she promptly paid the lobbyist back. I have to admit when I go to the Ethic's Commission Lobbying website I expect to find bad and ugly things. I did about McNary, but Rallo passed the good government test.

In 2009 McNary accepted \$2,291.14 in free food, drinks and gifts from lobbyists. That same year Rallo as the top staffer for McNary refused to accept \$112.34 worth of food and gifts from lobbyists according to Missouri Ethics Commission records.

In 2010 McNary accepted even more stuff from lobbyists to the tune of \$2,591.02. Plus another \$298.44 in gifts for his wife and yet another \$372.36 in lobbyist gifts for his kids.

During the same year Rallo was turning down and paying back \$144.91 in free stuff from lobbyists.



In 2011 McNary accepted 48 gifts, food and drinks from lobbyists valued at \$2,012.27. His wife hauled in \$158.23 in free stuff and his kids saw \$429.13 in free gifts (mostly sporting event tickets) from lobbyists.

Meanwhile in 2011 his chief of staff, Rallo, refused \$119.27 worth of food from lobbyists.

During the three years that Rallo was on McNary's staff...McNary accepted \$6,894.43 for himself and \$1,238.16 for his wife and kids. Rallo however, refused to accept anything from lobbyists and ended up paying the weasels back \$376.52.

Basically over three years Rallo attended functions where meals and drinks were provided by lobbyists and the lobbyist charged a portion toward all staffers who walked in the door whether they ate or not. I have a feeling there were time she paid back lobbyists for food and beverages she never had. One person in Jefferson city told me they once had a lobbyist claim they had \$35 in drinks. In fact they had one drink but so few people showed up the costs per item soared.

Over three years Rallo distanced herself from lobbyists by either refusing free stuff or when she found she was listed on a lobbyist expense report, promptly writing a check for the amount of money claimed. Sen. John Lamping has been doing the same since he was elected and complaining how lobbyists were claiming to give him things he knew nothing about.

**ANDERSON KICK OFF PHOTO:** The below photo from Amy Anderson's campaign kickoff party posted on her campaign facebook site looks like a Principia alumni get together with the one exception of crazy deer loving Mariette Palmer on the end of the sofa. I'm guessing incumbent Chuck Lenz will have to overcome 150 Principia and Christian Science votes for reelection. Of course Chuck is active with St. Anselm Catholic Church, however I have a feeling the Christian Science folks vote as a block more than the Catholics do.



## UANAPPROVED CHESTERFIELD NEWSLETTER 66



March 24, 2014

By John Hoffmann

### **AIR SHOW AND PLANNED MALL SHOOTING WILL KEEP CHESTERFIELD POLICE AND MONARCH FIRE BUSY THE FIRST WEEKEND IN MAY:**

The first weekend in May will see a 3-Day Air Show at the Spirit of St. Louis Airport that will include a show by the Navy Blue Angels. This will require Chesterfield police to deal with traffic and Monarch EMS units to be at the air show for any medical issues with the expected large numbers of spectators or airplane pilots.



Also on Sunday May 4 a coordinated major training event will begin at 6pm when Chesterfield Mall closes for the day. St. Louis County Police, Chesterfield Police, seven fire districts and 18 area emergency rooms will be involved in a simulated mall shooting event with "multiply shooters." This training exercise will be based on the Westgate mall shootings in Kenya, with 150 people acting as victims being transported to area hospitals.



Part of the plan is to "stress" hospitals to see how they react to the much higher ER loads and demands.

Between 6pm and 10pm might not be a good time to get hurt and need a trip to the ER.

**CUNNINGHAM ANNOUNCING SHE WILL NOT ENTER THE RACE SHE COULD NOT WIN:** Former State Senator and current Monarch Fire District Director Jane Cunningham announced last Wednesday that she would not file to run for County Executive. Many people, myself included believe the County Executive is a race that no Republican can currently win. To get rid of Charlie Dooley God fearing long term Republicans are going to have to go to the open primary in August, low their voice and ask for a Democratic ballot.

Jane did release a one-page statement which was an extremely gratuitous document praising herself for her actions over the last year at the Fire District and attacking County executive Charlie "Scandal of the Week" Dooley for well...all the scandals involving his administration in the last two years.

Cunningham did not say what her intentions were for the open Missouri Senate race this year, but that she would some "good news soon."

In a follow-up email Jane admitted she is still considering a Senate race, but a day later on the Jamie Allman show and hedged whether she was in the Senate race or not. The next day on Friday I was on with Allman and

he definitely said Jane announced she was not going to enter the Senate race. Later that evening Jane emailed me and said she had not made up her mind and would by Tuesday March 25 the last day to file.

**THE POST-DISPATCH VERSUS CUNNINGHAM:** For some very strange reason the editors at the Post-Dispatch don't like Jane and also apparently don't care about their readers...they keep using (especially online) a photo of Jane that has to be 12 years old. It doesn't look anything like today's Jane.



PD file photo



Current Cunningham photo

Jane tells us that she keeps sending the Post-Dispatch current photos, but believes they want to make her look "matronly and old fashion."

**MONARCH BOARD OF DIRECTORS DECLARES ITSELF DRUG FREE:**

At the March 13 Monarch Fire District Board of Directors meeting, board president Robin Harris announced during the following week all the members of the board of directors were given a surprise drug test. He also stated that all three members passed. There was no mention if high cholesterol drugs were part of the test. (Everyone on the board is 60-plus)

This year the board has changed the drug testing rules for firefighters, who used to only have to provide samples for a drug tests if they were driving a fire district vehicle involved in a wreck or appeared to be under the influence of a drug at work. Now all employees are subject to random drug testing.

Harris, an airline pilot for Delta has to give urine drug tests occasionally as part of his job. I doubt it Jane Cunningham or Steve Swyers have had to pee in a jar away from a doctors' office any time in recent memory.

## **FIRE DISTRICT EXPERIENCES FIRST NEGATIVE REVENUE FLOW:**

For the first time in anyone's memory during the first quarter Monarch Fire Protection District experienced a negative revenue flow. The district is short \$650,000. It was mentioned that due to continued tough economic times some people are delinquent in paying their 2013 property taxes.

Controller Michele Depew also said people who challenged their 2013 property assessments had their payments filed "under protest" go into special account while the appeals are heard.



Controller Michele Depew looks for a bill as Fire District Attorney Mike Bakewell looks on.

Fire district officials are hoping the "under protest" tax money will reach them after April 1.

**RESERVE SHRINKS:** Also the district's cash reserve is shrinking. The district must maintain a 40% cash reserve. The reserve fund has now fallen to 44%, the lowest it has been in recent years.

"Do we have an expenses problem or a revenue problem? I think we have both," said board member and treasurer Steve Swyers.

## **MOST OF CITY COUNCIL IGNORES ST. PATRIK'S DAY...Mayor and Former Mayors Included in Refusal to Acknowledge St. Patrick's Day:**

Politicians in Chesterfield must either think there are no people going by the names of Kelly or O'Shea living in Chesterfield or they don't vote judging from the lack of green being worn at Monday's March 17 City Council Meeting. Only two of nine elected officials in Chesterfield worn anything green on St. Patrick's Day. To make matters worse John Nations who abandoned his elected office in midterm to take the job of running Metro/Bi-State Transit (with no experience in transit) showed up wearing

ORANGE! For God's sake if it was 1844 would he be offering soup for those who would renounce their religion? Here are some photos:



Here is Mayor Bob Nation reading a proclamation to Jane Durrell the city's Citizen of the Year. Mayor Nation has on grey, pink and purple, while Jane is in all brown.



It's a little bit of Belfast as former Mayor John Nations wears orange and his wife wears green. Meanwhile former mayor Bruce Geiger has on a navy blue jacket and a light blue shirt.



Of the four councilpersons from Wards 4 and 3 only Mike Casey is wearing green (a tie). On the opposite side of the dais only Nancy Greenwood was wearing green.

**CASEY CALLS OUT KAZEN INDIRECTLY AT COUNCIL MEETING:** Ward 3 Councilman Mike Casey fires a shot over the inaccuracies on Kazen's facebook site (also reported in this newsletter).

On Kazen's election facebook page he claimed that Chesterfield only retains 6% of the one-cent municipal sales tax it collects and rest goes into the "sales tax pool" shared by a number of other cities. That claim is grossly false. Chesterfield gives up about 54% that it collects and retains 46%.

After the Citizen of the Year Award presentation was over and a tedious 15-minute presentation by the Chesterfield Citizens for Environment which consisted of people reading page after page of speeches...there were still a few people left in the room. (I was glad I brought a book). Mike Casey asked Mayor Bob Nation if before legislative matters could Nation explain to the citizens in room about the sales tax issues. "Some of the candidates for election seem to be confused as to the numbers," said Casey, with Kazen sitting in the second row in front of him.

Nation then gave out the 54% to the pool and 46% to the city numbers adding that last year businesses in Chesterfield generated \$14.5 million in the standard 1-cent municipal sales revenue (the city still collects full shares on the Parks Sales Tax and the Capital Improvement Sales Tax) with \$8.1 million going to the pool and \$6.4 million going to the city.

**DUELING SALES TAX LEGISLATION:** Mayor Nation went on to explain how in 1983 the State Legislature passed a law that forced all new cities in St. Louis County to participate in the sales tax pool and not retain 100% of sales tax generated in the cities.

Currently there are two house bills in the legislature regarding St. Louis County sales tax. House Bill 2034 by Republican Mike Leara would eliminate the sales tax pool over 10 years reducing the amount going into the pool 10% a year. Leara represents Sunset Hill and Fenton. Fenton is a pool city by choice which used to get a fortune in property tax when Chrysler was producing cars. After Chrysler shut down and the property became a huge empty lot revenue was tight for Fenton. But since the Gravois Bluffs Shopping Center has opened they now want to get out of the pool and keep all the money.



**Mike Leara**

The other bill, House Bill 2111 is by Democrat Genise Montecillo, who represents the unincorporated areas of Affton and parts of Mehlville and Concord. Montecillo's bill would put all cities in the pool. It would mean that cities like Richmond Heights, Brentwood, Des Peres, Ballwin and Creve Coeur would lose sales tax revenue. However, Chesterfield would gain revenue but would still be giving a large chunk of tax revenue to the pool.



**Genise Montecillo**

Let's face it with a Republican controlled state house the likely hood of Montecillo's bill passing is not good.

### **KAZEN'S LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS STATEMENT IS CONFUSING:**

On Andy Kazen's election facebook page as of March 17 directs readers to a Voter's Guide Website on the Post-Dispatch website. Here is the side by side between the two candidates:



**Mike Casey** Consultant, metals industry

### **Biographical Information**

Age 69

Address [1925 CLAYMILLS DR  
CHESTERFIELD, MO 63017](#)

Public elected offices held Councilmember, Chesterfield, Ward 3

Highest post-secondary education College

Incumbent? Y



**Andy Kazen** Regional sales manager

### **Endorse on Facebook**

### **Biographical Information**

Age 59

Address [2029 LAKE CLAY DR  
CHESTERFIELD, MO 63017](#)

Campaign website <http://www.facebook.com/AndyKazenForCityCouncil?ref=hl>

Highest post-secondary education B.A., Boston College, political science

Incumbent? N

**What three things would you do to improve delivery of services?**

**Mike Casey** City services connect us to our residents. The public works and planning departments continue to excel in delivery of high quality services. The police department is internationally accredited and is recognized as the finest in the region. Our fiscal soundness is evidenced by our Triple-A bond rating. Our parks dept. delivers concerts, walking trails and a dog park.

**Andy Kazen** I'd work to increase Chesterfield's share of the sales tax in St. Louis County, the only Missouri county pooling the sales tax. We only keep six percent of the tax revenue from sales in Chesterfield. We share with the county and other cities like Florissant. This impacts hundreds of thousand dollars annually! Consider proposing city- sponsored leaf removal if we fix above!

### **Why are you qualified to serve in this office?**

**Mike Casey** Serving since 1998 as your Ward 3 Councilmember has given me the opportunity to give back to the community. "Serving residents first" has always been most important to me. My goal is to keep Chesterfield the premier city we have become. My 16 years of experience will ensure that the residents of Ward 3 will continue to receive the qualified leadership they deserve.

**Andy Kazen** I have lived in Chesterfield about 15 years. I'm a trustee for the Claymont Lake Estates homeowners association. I have decided to get more involved in our community. I bring fresh ideas and a new perspective. I believe it's important to have an infusion of "new blood" in our vibrant community. I will work with the mayor to make the sales tax issue a HIGH priority!

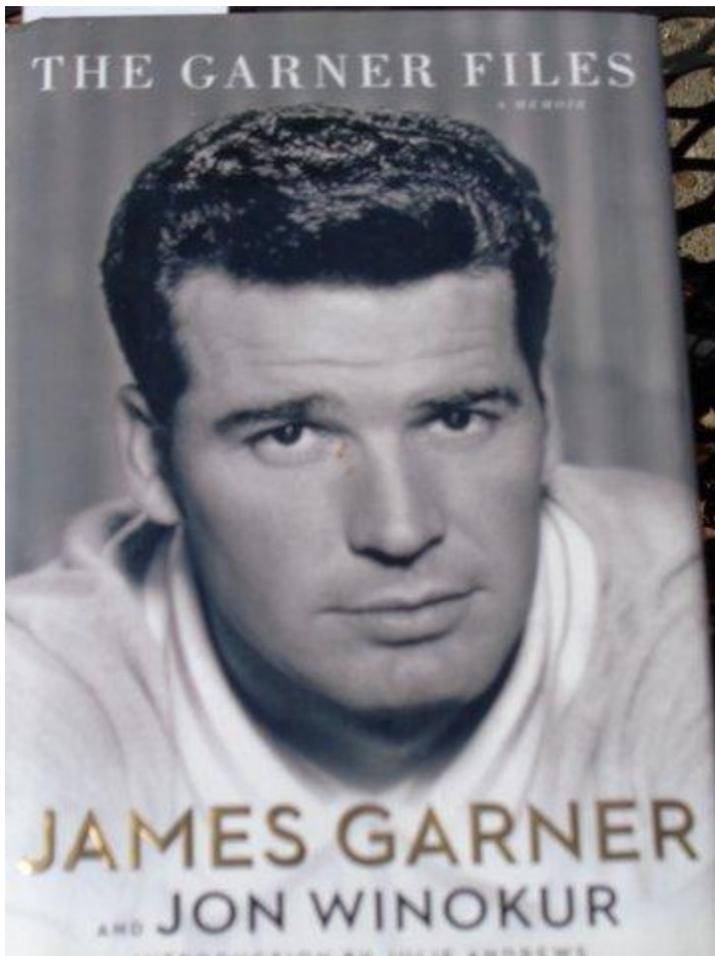
Kazen continues to make the **false claim** that Chesterfield only keeps 6% of the municipal sales taxes stores in the city collect.

**Wrong Race:** Kazen then states he wants to do something about the tax pool. If that is the case Kazen should have filed to run in the State Representative race, since this issue is decided in the statehouse and not by the city council.

**Mike Casey** makes the usual incumbent statement about all the good things the city does and how he is at least partially responsible. For people upset over the city council allowing the two new outlet malls to obtain TDD and CID long term special sales taxes to be used for the cost of building their malls or the streets, lighting and storm water systems Casey is one of the guys that jacked up the sales taxes and put some of it in the developer's pocket.

**OUR THANKS TO ANDY KAZEN:** If it wasn't for City Council candidate Andy Kazen complaining about the picture I run of James Garner playing cards as Maverick every time I run his photo and would not have read a great book. (Kazen has a "How to Play Poker website.) Kazen said no one under the age of 60 knows who Maverick is. He might have a point, but since many if not most of our readers are eligible for AARP cards, I don't think his complaint is too valid.

But Andy's complaint did get me to checkout Garner's memoir, "The Garner Files," from the library. It was a fun read with Garner being brutally honest concerning the acting ability of some of his co-stars.

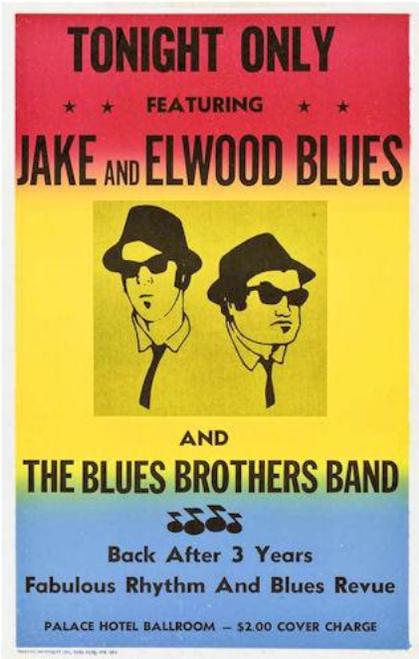


**THE BLUES IS MY BUSINESS AND APPARENTLY BUSINESS IS GOOD IN CHESTERFIELD:** On Wednesday March 19 Bill McClellan has an assuming column that focused on the St. Louis Blues Festival leaving St. Louis and moving to Chesterfield.

[http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/columns/bill-mcclellan/bill-mcclellan-singing-the-chesterfield-blues/article\\_09751df8-df23-5809-ad2e-1220fb7080a3.html](http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/columns/bill-mcclellan/bill-mcclellan-singing-the-chesterfield-blues/article_09751df8-df23-5809-ad2e-1220fb7080a3.html)

I sent Bill an email pointing out some of the inconsistencies of having a Blues Festival in Chesterfield.

While the blues originated among black musicians in the deep south and later white urban musicians began to participate, it never was really a suburban music form until the Blues Brothers appeared.



Chesterfield is 86.2 % White  
8.2% Asian  
2.1% Hispanic (1,009 in 2010)  
2.1% Black (991)

Chesterfield's median household income is \$88,848 which is two times higher than the state average.

The median price of a house or a condo in Chesterfield is 2 1/2 times higher than the state average.

The cost of living index in Chesterfield is under the average cost of living in the United States by 7.2%.

The crime rate in Chesterfield is 3-times under the U.S. average. The unemployment rate is 2.1% below the Missouri average.

There was plenty of places to shop, two movie complexes, an abundance of restaurants, plus a great parks and recreation system.

It is hard to find much in Chesterfield to sing the blues about. If you want to buy a new car you do have to leave town and head to Manchester Road. I guess that could cause you to get the blues.

I wanted to look for a Toyota, Chevy or a Ford  
But there was nothing on Chesterfield Airport Road  
What I'm I going to do for a new car dear Lord  
I have to get out of town down to Manchester Road  
I've got those "I have to leave my hometown to get to Lou Fusz Blues."

## **TWO GUYS WHO WANT TO CHANGE HOW WE PRONOUNCE ST.**

**LOUIS:** Well not exactly the name of the city, but the name of one of the founders of the city and a major city street.

At the start of the February 3 City Council meeting, two fellows from the Stl250 organization spoke before the meeting. They were Mr. Cicardy Bruce and Mr. Rick Pessani.



Cicardy Bruce and Rick Pessani



August Chouteau

The two guys were talking about the St. Louis 250th Anniversary and I really wasn't paying a lot of attention except when they would pronounce the co-founder of St. Louis August Chouteau's name. Instead of saying "Show-toe" they would say "Show-too." This got my attention.

At one point one of them explained that they met someone who claimed to be a relative of Chouteau and said the name has always been pronounced "Show-too" and not "Show-toe."

Two internet pronunciation sources claim different ways to pronounce the name and neither are the way Bruce and Pessani suggest. "pronouncenames.com" claims it is "SH OH T OH" or "Show-Toe."

The website "listmyfive.com" has a female blogger listing Chouteau as the number 1 mispronounced street in St. Louis. She claims the proper French pronunciation of Chouteau should be "shoo-toe" but St. Louisians pronounce it "show-toe."

My advice to these two guys is to go back to "Show-Toe." It is the St. Louis way and they are suggesting we celebrate St. Louis and not some French guy's relative.

If they insist on this "Show-Too" pronunciation then they need to go to work and have people stop calling Gravois "Grav-Voy" and start calling it "Grav-Wah. Also while they are at...how long will it be before some people will want you to stop calling Bopp Road "Bope Road" and quit calling Spoede Road "Spay-Dee" and start calling it "Spo-Dee."

It is a long slippery slope these two suggest we head down. I suggest we avoid it at all costs or start calling the place "Saint Louie" and we all know nobody is going to do that.

**RED LIGHT CAMERAS...WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE:** For 16 years that I lived in Maryland outside of Washington, DC I complained about many things that I thought were done better in Missouri. My first months as a cop in Maryland I followed how a jeweler in Bethesda, Maryland chased two hold up men out of his store and took a couple shots at the armed pair. He missed, including any bystanders, parked cars or anything else of value. The liberal county states' attorney charged the jeweler with a felony of reckless endangerment. The jeweler was acquitted but went bankrupt paying for his defense and lost his business. I thought if this had occurred in St. Louis nothing would have happened to the jeweler and if it happened in Kansas City several civic organizations would have given him citizen-of-the-year awards.

Also in Maryland there was no 24-hour rule where you could hold a felony suspect allowing you to gather more evidence and apply at the prosecutor's office for a warrant. In Maryland as soon as you arrested the person you had to go directly to a court commissioner. It made for a lot of weak cases and suspects being released.

However some things in Maryland were much better than in Missouri. There were no municipal courts. All traffic tickets were heard in a state court. Fine money went to the State of Maryland General Fund. No one could accuse local police of running a speed trap to raise money. Fine money was more likely going down the drain in some social welfare program in Baltimore than reaching some town north of Washington, DC with cops writing speeding tickets.



When it came to red light cameras there was an actual need for them. There were many intersections where the traffic was so heavy it would be impossible to have an officer in a patrol car do red light violation enforcement. It was too dangerous for an officer to try and get into traffic and chase down a red light violator.



Mid day traffic on Wisconsin Avenue in Bethesda Maryland.



A Bethesda side street.



Mid day traffic on Connecticut Ave.



Southbound morning rush hour traffic on Wisconsin Avenue in front of NIH, Navy Med and Walter Reed in Bethesda, MD not moving.

The reason the Maryland Red Light camera system worked is because the Maryland General Assembly had regulations and involved the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) in the enforcement.

If you received parking tickets and didn't pay them the MVA was notified and your license plates were suspended. You could not renew your plates every two years until you paid the fines and a fee for processing at the MVA. Maryland treated Red Light Camera violations the same as parking violations. Your car was somewhere it didn't belong at a certain time, going through an intersection when it was suppose to be behind the white stop line. There were no points. but the penalty was the same across the state and if you didn't pay or ask for a court hearing your plates were suspended.

Due to the heavy traffic volumes on Olive Blvd. and Manchester Road there is a solid argument that red light cameras would add to public safety. But that said, there needs

to be control with state oversight and the cities need to own the equipment and not allow a vender to collect a percentage of each fine.

It would be good to see cities keep a portion of the fines to pay for the operations of the cameras and for police officers to review the photos, but have the rest of the fine money either go to a pool shared by school districts or to the state general road fund to eliminate the opposition claiming the red light camera were only there to generate money.

For Red Light cameras to work in Missouri there needs to be a state wide system set up by a statute out of Jefferson City, that includes a mechanism to ensure that violators don't ignore citations. You cannot have hundreds of different Red Light Camera Violation policies written by municipalities across the state. You need one statewide!

Photo radar speed cameras are a different animal and I'm against them. As a former radar and laser speed instrument instructor I know that photo radar enforcement has a lot of problems especially in areas with heavy traffic.

**THE EXPRESS SCRIPTS SHAKEDOWN:** While I was on Blue Cross/Blue Shield for health insurance after returning to Missouri in 2006 I received prescription drugs through Walgreen's Mail Order, which provided 90 day supplies of prescription meds. I had experienced no problems, but no longer had a local pharmacist to answer questions.

When Obama Care was looming my wife and I were skeptical as we could not get on the Healthcare website for weeks or if we did it the website crashed. But after six weeks we got on the website, registered and bought insurance through Coventry Health Care. It was a bargain compared for what we were paying for two separate policies with different carriers. We were saving a significant amount of money.

Coventry has Express Scripts handle all prescription med approval. You don't have to buy from Express Scripts but all prescriptions for other retailers get approved from Express Scripts.

I asked at my doctor's office if I should use Express Scripts or Costco. I was told to just go ahead and use Express Scripts. Then I mentioned that I had a \$250 deductible first and I was told in that case to use Costco. The overall prices are lower at Costco if I'm paying out of pocket.

So I set up my prescriptions with Costco. First I got a couple of letters from Express Scripts claiming their service was better.

But then I got a letter in March, dated "February 2014." saying "**ACTION WAS REQUIRED.**" This was the shakedown.

The letter concerned a drug that I take twice a day. Here is what it said:

"Our records show that you've already ordered this medication at least once at a retail pharmacy. **If we have not heard from you before your third purchase of this medication, you'll pay its entire cost under your plan at a retail pharmacy** until you contact us. Afterward, you will again be able to pay your usual retail copayment."



Of course wanting to have my insurance plan actually pay for a portion of my meds, I called the toll free number for Express Scripts. A recorded voice repeatedly told me how important I was and how they would be right to my call. 22 minutes later I spoke to someone at Express Scripts, who wanted me to switch to Express Scripts . I said I didn't appreciate the marketing people threatening to discontinue my drug coverage unless I switch to him and I was calling to say I was staying with Costco.



I was told she had updated my file and I would not receive any similar letters until next year when I will get another one threatening to revoke my coverage. It makes me proud that a hometown company is playing hardball with people who have signed up for Obama Care trying to force them away from an approved pharmacy.

I have to think in the long run that Coventry is saving some money, because Costco has some unbelievably low prices.

**MUSIC: THE ANITA SHOW RETURNS TO SMITTY'S:** Anita Rosamond returns for her highly popular Saturday afternoon show at Smitty's on Saturday March 29 from 2:30 to 5:30. Everyone has a good time when Anita is at Smitty's if you can get a table. It is also the Pork Steak Blue Plate Special Day too! Smitty's is on Clayton Road just east of Baxter.



I said everybody sing!



Regulars and grand kids



Anita gets the snarl just right for an Elvis song Anita making Smitty angels.

**ANOTHER THE QUATROS STUPIDOS VICTORY:** Actually a couple of wins recently came after a 2-month drought that followed three straight December wins...it is trivia for fun and \$20 food gift cards at Fuzzy's Tacos in the Yorkshire Plaza in Webster Groves on Thursday nights. A retired high school athletic director, an artist and retired insurance claims manager, a current high school soft ball coach (who is the only one that knows songs from the last 20 years) and me make up the Quatros Stupidos team.

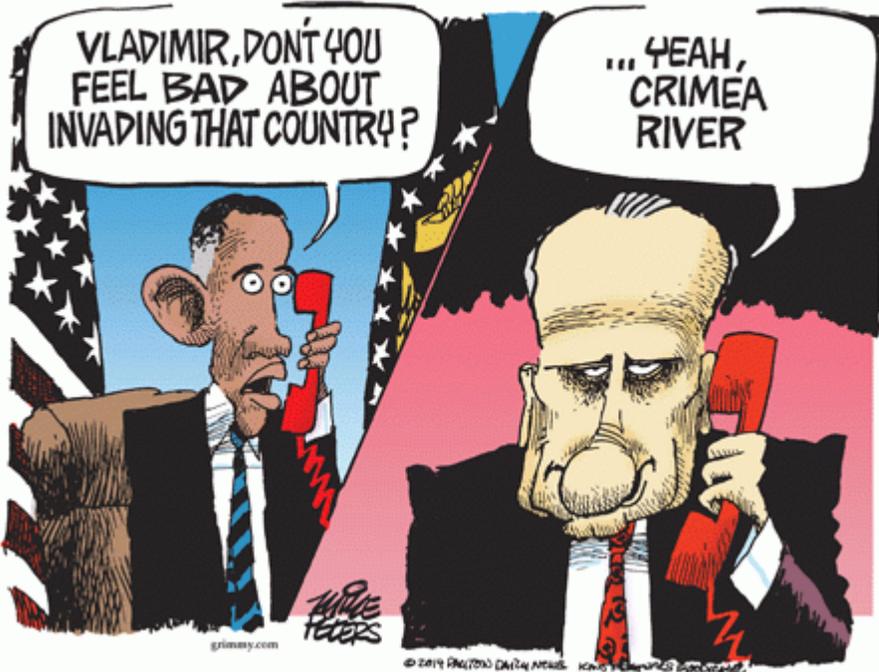


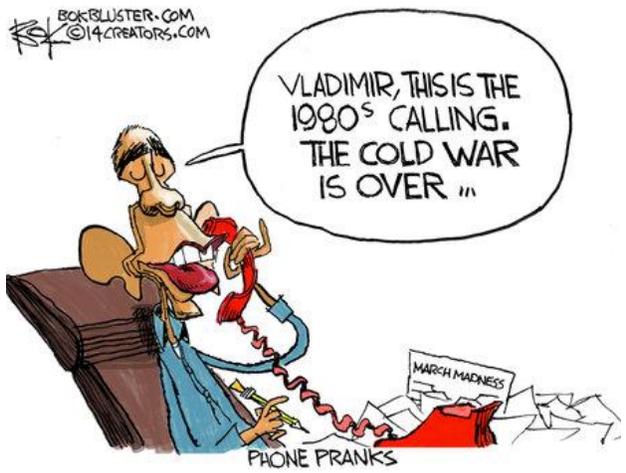
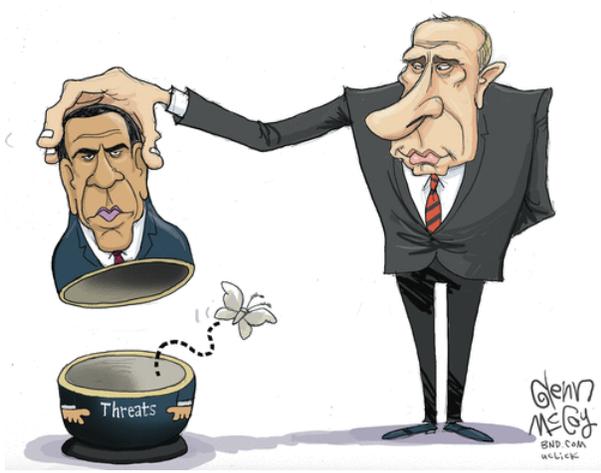
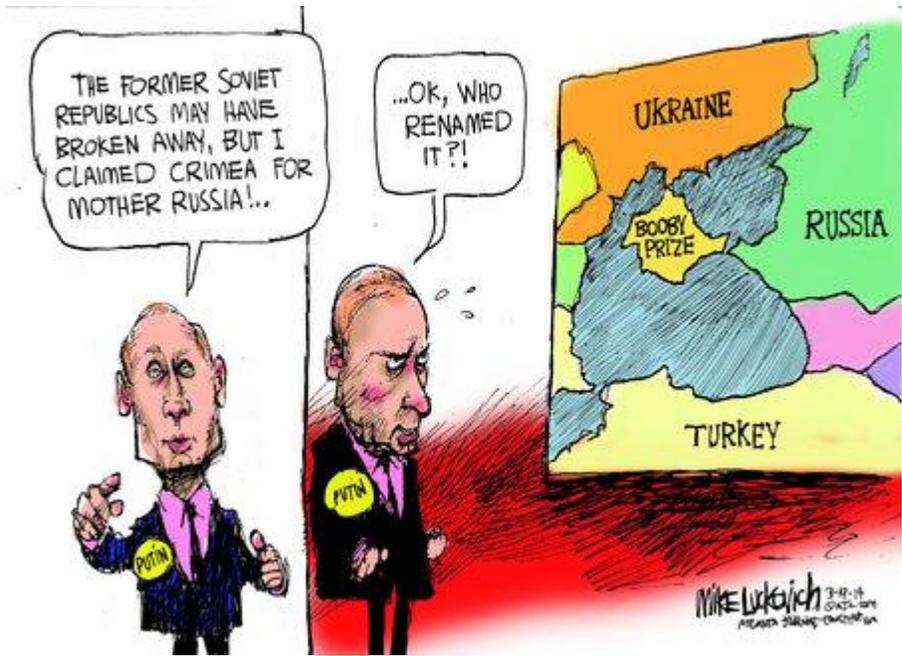
**PLAY TRIVIA IN CHESTERFIELD VALLEY:** Tom Byrne the quiz master at Fuzzy's does Trivia every Wednesday Night at the Hanger Grill at 127 Chesterfield Towne Center on Long Road at 8pm.



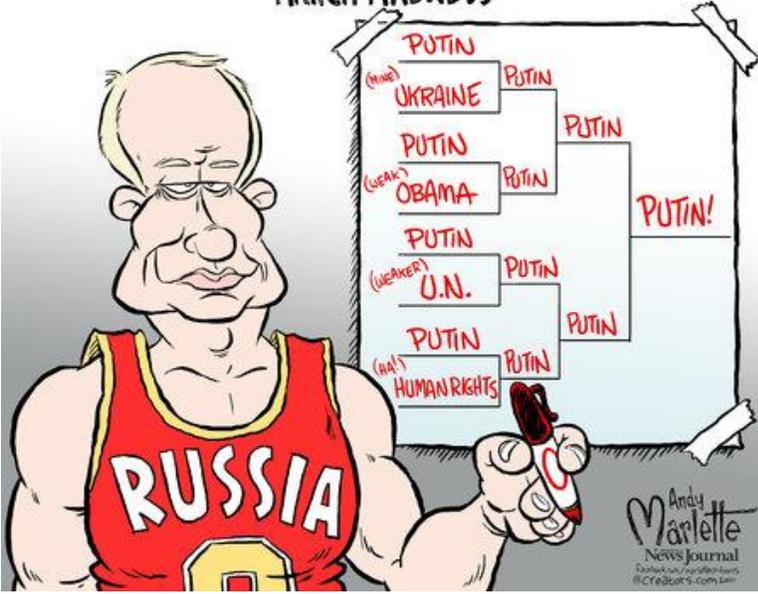
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