

EX ALDERMAN NEWSLETTER 102



October 31, 2013

By John Hoffmann

WELBY CALLS OUT MANGE FOR MISREPRESENTING LOG CABINS: He was right but only Chuck Lenz voted with him. If you remember when we first started writing about Alderman (and former mayor and former county councilman) Skip Mange wanting to collect log cabins at Drace Park, we quoted Mange saying he would save, move and rebuild a log cabin and would not use “tax money.” He raised money to pay to have the log cabin from property on Conway Road dismantled and moved to Drace Park, where it is being stored.

That promise of using “no tax money” later changed to using “no city funds” as Mange wanted to later ask for a Municipal Parks Grant for the log cabin reconstruction. The grant money comes from an area wide sales tax.

At the October 14 Board of Aldermen meeting Mange wanted to apply for a Park Grant of over \$80,000 for the reconstruction of the latest log cabin, plus for the building of a “sitting wall” from the foundation stones that came with the log cabin. He wanted the city to include putting up \$4,550 or 5-percent which would increase the points awarded the project by the grants commission.

Here is how some of the exchange went:

Ald. Welby: We agreed as a group we would not spend any city funds. I think it is wrong. The rules appear to have changed and I don't like it.

Mayor Dalton: I remember that there were no city funds to obtain and preserve the asset.

Ald. Lenz: I agree with Ald. Welby. The group's opinion was not to use city funds for construction and there would be no legislation to that effort.

Ald. Meyland-Smith: I did not want to obligate the city to play for the whole cost of the reconstruction.

Mayor Dalton: It seems to me there is a lot to this that hasn't been covered.

Ald. Crawford: Why should we turn away the \$80,000 for reconstruction?

Ald. Mange: I envision getting school groups coming to see what life was like in the 1850's.

The measure passed 6-to-2 with Welby and Lenz voting against it.



Welby votes no on the application for a parks grant as Skip Mange looks disgusted.

FLIP-FLOP; WELBY STILL THE ALDERDOPE: While it was nice to see Welby and Chuck Lenz taking a position against spending any more money from the city's reserve fund in a year that the city was looking at a \$6,000,000 deficit that reduced the city's reserve by one-third. Even if some road construction projects come under cost and we saved \$1,000,000 good government practices would say that you don't spend any unnecessary money when you have a deficit of \$5-million.

However that did not stop the Board of Aldermen from voting, 8-0, to reinstate full branch chipping services for \$80,000. Welby, as chair of the Public Works Commission is taking full credit for this. Despite the fact, that when the Finance Commission prepared a budget recommendation for 2013 they left out branch chipping. In fact several years ago when it was clear revenue was going to be flat, the Finance

Commission strongly recommended that the branch chipping program be discontinued until “further notice.”

Branch chipping is the number one comment from citizens to elected officials about services they want to return. Providing branch chipping is an easy and popular thing to do. But elected officials are there to make tough and sometimes unpopular decisions. Bringing back branch chipping before the revenue flow improves was not good government.

While voting to keep Mange from getting \$4,550 toward his parks grant after he had proclaimed that no city money would be used in the log cabin project, was the right vote to make. But 10 minutes later to vote to spend \$80,000 was a wrong vote.

WHAT IS MANGE SMOKING? Since Skip Mange is a practicing member of the Christian Science Church and on the faculty of the church run Principia School, which is closed to all but members of the church...I can only assume that Mange has not over medicated himself, since the church is against doctors and medicine. I have to think he is using some other substance that in Missouri is considered illegal.

Mange keeps repeating his dream that he wants to build a “sitting wall” at Drace Park, so students can come to the park and learn what it was like to live in the 1850s. What teacher is stupid enough to bring a class to this park? Nearby Faust Park run by the County with more log cabins is a much more appropriate location for an education stop.

Drace Park is a “passive park.” It is where Missouri Baptist Medical Center workers go on their lunch break so they can smoke. It is where married men meet their married girlfriends. It is also a spot for dog walkers and moms to put kids on the playground equipment while they talk with other moms or talk on their cell phones.

Currently one of the two “cabins” is open with no actual doors or windows and doesn’t depict much of anything. The other one is not from the 1850’s and is more like from the early 1900s with a 1950 addition on it, with electricity to the house.

The Parks Commission and Art Commission plan to plant a piece of modern art in the form of an Ernst Trova sculpture in the middle of the log cabins.

There is no outhouse with the accompanying smell and flies nearby. There are no animals such as horses or a milk cow along with their feces in the immediate area. Chickens were not banned in the 1850s, so Skip would have to break the new law and

set up an 1850's style chicken coop. There will be no "unpurified" water for the kids to drink.

The students should also arrive after not bathing for at least five days, as folks back in the 1850s often bathed just once a week. Antiseptic practices or even washing hands by doctors did not occur until the 1890s, so no wearing any Band-Aids. Also not too many cabins in the 1850s had a constant roar of traffic from an interstate highway.

The next problem is of course furnishing the log cabins with either real items or replicas of the era. This is going to be a costly proposition. This doesn't involve sending a city employee to estate sales or the new re-sale consignment shop in the Lamp and Lantern Shopping Center, because the best they could hope to do is get something from 1900. Let's face it...something from 1900 or 1920 will be far too modern. Heck items used by the prop master on Little House on the Prairie would be too modern. This is going to be a very expensive endeavor.

Lastly in the 1850s municipal governments were not building sitting walls so kids could be lectured to by people like Skip Mange.

MANGE VS THE GARDEN CLUB: I have observed another problem in Skip Mange's plan to use the current two log cabins and his third cabin that is waiting to be rebuilt to educate children on what it was like to live in 1850. Here is a photo of the Drace Cabin:



I don't think people in the 1850 planted ornamental flowers directly next to their log cabin which blocked the windows. However the ladies of the Town and Country Garden

Club have spent considerable time planting these flowers. I don't think they would like them to be removed so we could return to 1850.

CHICKEN SAFETY: Skip Mange was plenty upset when the Planning and Zoning Commission voted against allowing chickens in backyards. He also was not too please when the P&Z ruling was approved by the Board of Aldermen on October 14. However who is to stop someone from releasing wild chickens inside the city limits. We will know that something is up if they are outfitted with reflective safety vests like these two. Two different newsletter readers sent me this photo.



IT'S ONE, TWO, THREE STRIKES YOU ARE OUT AT THE OLD ALDERMANIC

MEETING: I was amazed that on Thursday October 24 the regularly scheduled Board of Alderman meeting for Monday October 28 was CANCELLED for the lack of a quorum.

Yes it was Game 5 of the World Series and I'm guessing at least half of our fine elected officials suddenly had tickets. Even if they didn't, in theory you want people to attend Board of Aldermen meetings, so having a meeting during the game would not be a great idea. Also you have aldermen like Fred Meyland-Smith, who appears to hate baseball because for years during the league playoff games involving the Cardinals he will continue to drone on and on during a meeting, feeling obligated to make unneeded speeches and ask questions that don't clarify any issues long after the first pitch.

However, to CANCEL the meeting instead of simply moving it to Tuesday was stupid. Part of the deal of being an elected official in Town and Country is to attend two meetings a month. That is not so tough.

I hope the alderpersons will return 50% of their monthly pay to the city when they receive their October paycheck. Don't laugh! In the two years I was on the Board I missed two meetings and each time I returned part of my monthly salary. It can be done.

MILLION DOLLAR DIEHL STILL RAKING IT IN: Town and Country State Rep John Diehl, who since 2008 has always run unopposed in primary and general elections pulled in another \$86,180 in campaign contributions in the third quarter of this non-election year. **That brings Diehl's total for money raised to run against no one to a staggering \$1,3324,896.**



If you remember over the years Diehl has been accepting almost all of this money from companies and persons outside of his legislative district. Contributors have included those from the tobacco, liquor, gambling and health care industries.

If you read our Ex-Alderman Newsletter 91 from July you'd know that Diehl was hoping to win the Republican caucus Speaker of the House vote this year for the 2015 term. In garnering support his finance report filed with the Missouri Ethics Commission

showed he was taking individual Republican caucus members out to dinners ranging in price from \$113 to \$682. The \$242 dinner for two at the Ecco Lounge in Jefferson City really got our attention. The Ecco Lounge is similar to Smitty's on Clayton Road where most entrees are between \$12 and \$16.

http://www.johnhoffmann.net/ex_newsletter_91.pdf

Here are some of Diehl's contributors from the third quarter of this year giving \$500 or more :

\$5,000	Mark Gardner	Springfield, MO	Lawyer
\$2,500	AT&T	St. Louis	Telecommunications
\$5,000	Major Brands	St. Louis	Liquor Distributor
\$2,000	Liberty Mutual	Sunset Hills	Insurance
\$500	Missouri Troopers Assoc	Jefferson City	Labor Org
\$500	Assoc of MO Electric Coop	Jefferson City	Utility PAC
\$1,000	Ameren Missouri PAC	Jefferson City	Utility PAC
\$500	MO Council of Firefighters	Blue Springs	Labor PAC
\$1,000	John Bardgett & Associates	Chesterfield	Lobbyist
\$4,000	Maco Development Co	Clarkton	Commercial Dev
\$5,000	Fred Weber Construction	Maryland Heights	Road construction
\$2,500	WalMart	Bentonville, AR	Retailer
\$1,000	McBride and Sons	Chesterfield	Home builder
\$300	Casey General Stores	Ankeny, IA	Retailer
\$500	Walgreens	Deerfield, IL	Retailer

\$500	Mo Healthcare Assoc	Jefferson City	Healthcare PAC
\$1,000	Norfolk Southern	Norfolk, VA	Railroad
\$1,000	MO Independent Bankers	Liberty	Banking
\$500	Tenet	Dallas, TX	Healthcare
\$1,000	MO Ambulatory Surgery	Lees Summit	Healthcare
\$1,000	Eli Lilly	Indianapolis, IN	Drug Manufacturer
\$500	CGI Technologies & Sol.	Fairfax, VA	Business Services
\$1,000	MLPA	Jefferson City	Limestone Producers PAC
\$500	MO Medical PAC	Jefferson City	Healthcare PAC
\$500	Credit Union PAC	Jefferson City	Banking PAC
\$500	MO Energy Development	Jefferson City	PAC
\$1,000	MO Petro & Conv. Stores	Jefferson City	Retailers' PAC
\$500	MO County Collectors	Edina	Government Association
\$1,500	Realtors' PAC	Columbia	Real Estate PAC
\$1,000	BNSF	Ft. Worth, TX	Railroad
\$500	Hy-Vee Employees' PAC	Des Moines, IA	Retail
\$1,000	MO Healthcare Assn	Jefferson City	Healthcare PAC
\$1,000	HCA Good Govt Fund	Jefferson City	PAC
\$500	MO Asphalt Pavers Assoc	Jefferson City	Construction PAC
\$1,000	MO Consumer Lenders	Jefferson City	Banking PAC
\$1,000	MO Pharmacy PAC	Jefferson City	Drugs
\$500	Rosana Biondo	Kansas City	President Mark One Electric
\$1,000	Terrance Dunn	Leawood, KS	J.E. Dunn Construction
\$500	Treanor Architects	Lawrence, KS	Construction
\$1,200	Hallmark Cards	Kansas City	Greeting Cards
\$500	Builders Construction PAC	Kansas City	Construction PAC
\$1,000	Polsinelli	Kansas City	Law firm
\$2,500	J.E. Dunn Construction	Kansas City	Construction
\$2,500	William Henry Agency	Kansas City	Insurance
\$1,000	MO Chamber PAC	Jefferson City	PAC
\$5,000	Noranda	New Madrid	Mining/Recycling
\$4,500	Altria Client Services	Richmond, VA	Tobacco
\$500	General Motors PAC	Washington, DC	Auto Manufacturing
\$500	Merck, sharp & Dohme	Whitehouse Sta. NJ	Healthcare
\$1,000	ANR Pipeline	Houston, TX	Energy
\$2,500	United Healthcare	Minneapolis, MN	Healthcare
\$500	RGA Reinsurance	Chesterfield	Insurance
\$1,000	Ameristar Casino	St. Charles	Gambling
\$1,000	Ameristar Casino	Kansas City	Gambling
\$2,000	Charter Communications	Town and Country	Cable TV

\$2,000	Comcast	Philadelphia, PA	Cable TV
\$1,000	Anheuser-Busch	St. Louis	Beer

WHERE DID THE MONEY GO? A large chunk of it as usual went to paying off credit card debt to the tune of \$13,456. That is a lot of money for a non-election year. Plus Diehl paid tens of thousands to political consults, a campaign worker, bank fees and postage.

Then there were the hotels and airplane tickets. Diehl represents Town and Country and Chesterfield in Jefferson City. So what was he doing spending \$827 at the Crown Point Golf Club in Farmington, MO. He claimed it was for fundraising, but then listed on revenue from fundraising. Then there were the hotel stays at the Hilton in Chicago, Illinois, the Hampton Inn in Kansas City, The Embassy Suites in Kansas City, the Hampton Inn in St. Joseph, Ramada Inn in Springfield and food at Legal Seafood in Atlanta, plus all the airline tickets.

But the big money...\$63,300 went to all current Republicans House members in the form mainly of contributions of either \$500 or \$1,000. While it was a non-election year, Diehl wanted his fellow Republicans to elect him as speaker of the house for 2015 in a 2013 party caucus. It worked he was tentatively elected the speaker for 2015. Of course that might not happen if the Democrats take control of the House, an unlikely scenario or if Diehl finally faces some opposition in 2014 for his house seat, also if history is a guide is an unlikely event.

Some might call this Diehl being generous with his fellow lawmakers. Others might see it as Diehl simply buying votes. I tend to be in the second group.

CATCHING UP ON OUR READING When we returned from our third and final vacation for 2013 I spent several days catching up on my reading from local papers and magazines. Here are a few things I noticed:

From the Post-Dispatch:

Boy 16, is fatally shot on baseball field at city park...The article from the October 23 edition of the Post was a about a 16-year-old shot and killed on a baseball field at Goodfellow Blvd. and St. Louis Avenue. The article mentioned that the shooting may have been in retaliation for a shooting a week earlier. I was surprised...not about the shooting of a teenager in North St. Louis but that there was a baseball field on Goodfellow at St. Louis Ave.

Speed sign ‘advice’ to vanish on I-270, I-255...A story on how MODOT was going to remove the electronic speed limit signs.

I was working as an editor for Nokia which provided traffic reporting services for websites, TV and radio stations. I worked at the MODOT Traffic Management Center on I-64 at Hwy 141. I was there in 2008 when MODOT spent \$1,000,000 to install these electronic speed limit signs where the speed limit would be lowered based on traffic conditions. For over a year MODOT hired two part time employees during morning and evening rush hours just to work the signs and lower the speed limits when accidents occurred or volume caused traffic to slow.

It quickly became clear to those of us working on the floor monitoring all the cameras that the variable speed limit system was a waste of money. Simple message boards already in place could advise motorists of slow traffic ahead. However it took MODOT over five years to figure this out.

TOWN AND STYLE MAGAZINE: We have pointed out repeatedly how Bill Beggs, Jr. does not know crap about West County. Beggs, typically never actually goes out and attends a meeting or interviews anyone. He normally lifts stories from other publications for his Talk of the Towns column. Several years ago he blatantly lifted a column I wrote for the Chesterfield Patch.

Recently he placed the Manchester WalMart store in Ballwin. He or the editors routinely use the logo for the City of Rock Hill to accompany stories about Richmond Heights.

Now in the October 16 edition of Town and Style he claims that the AKC Museum of the Dog in Queeny Park along Mason Road is in Ballwin. While all of Queeny Park is in unincorporated St. Louis County, Mason Road in front of the Dog Museum is in Town and Country. In fact 2/3s of Queeny Park is surrounded by Town and Country. Not an inch of the park borders Ballwin.

The zip code for the Dog Museum is 63131, the Des Peres Post Office. Heck the mailman who delivers my mail also delivers the mail at the Dog Museum. The City of Manchester is between the Dog Museum and the City of Ballwin. Correctness has never appeared to be important to either Mr. Beggs or the editors of Town and Style.

MUSIC: Normally I run in this space some of the jazz or big band events I have been at or that will be upcoming in the area. However, I have been out of town for a while...so here are a few shots of music I was enjoying and in some cases not enjoying that much.

We were on the Cunard Queen Mary 2 cruise ship. While I cannot recommend it, I certainly can recommend the Mark Hodgson Jazz Trio that played every night in the Chart Room Bar. While the drummer and bass player are youngsters, Hodgson, born outside of Yorkshire and now living with his wife on Bali, when he is not on a cruise ship, is a talent on the piano doing jazz.



The Canadian Royal Navy Reserve Concert Band's sax section played in the ship terminal in Quebec city. They were okay. However, a full concert by the Canadian Navy Concert Band, made me glad to be an American with the US Navy and Air force bands which are soooo much better than these guys.



The Manhattan Dolls performing with the Queen Mary 2 Dance Band, doing some of the Andrew Sisters greatest hits. The difference is that none of the Dolls were the least bit homely as were all of the Andrew Sisters.

VACATION PHOTOS: Here are a few of my favorite shots from our New England and Canada vacation. My wife and I make it a point to try and avoid the usual tourist spots and if in Canada or the US to rent a car whether we have flown in or on cruise ships and explore off the beaten path.



We were driving down residential streets of Lunenburg, Nova Scotia about 90 minutes south of Halifax at 10:30 in the morning when we saw an antique fire truck being pulled out of a garage on Lorne Street. Of course I stopped and started to talk to Will Brooks, a retired PhD in Psychology from a local university and a former command staffer with the local volunteer fire department. Will built a garage behind his house that is like a firehouse. He has a 1937 American La France pumper from Cumberland, Maryland and a 1915 Model T fire truck. We spent an hour visiting with him.



Boston

Boston is one of America's greatest cities to walk in. However this was the view of Boston from the balcony on the cruise ship. It looked like an area in Eastern Europe that was bombed during WWII and never rebuilt.



Fall colors along the Gold River in Nova

Scotia. Nova Scotia was the best for leaf peeping.

FOOD:



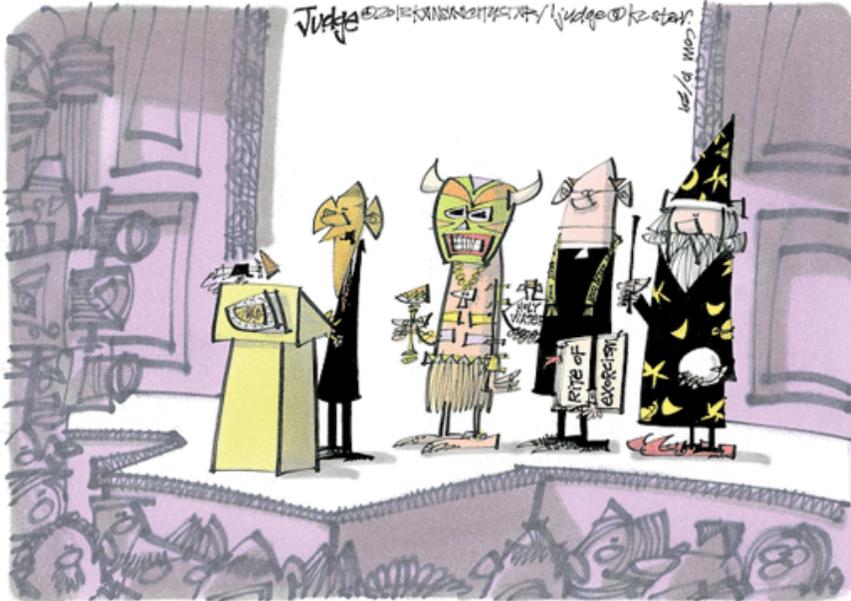
Maine

A lunch of lobster, a crab roll, sweet potato crinkle fires, home cut regular fries and slaw in a small town an hour north of Bar Harbor, Maine. Note the bottle of Capt. Eli's Blueberry Pop.



The best bowl of Chowder on our trip was at Kedy's Inlet Café in Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia. White gloved tea service was every day on the cruise ship from 3:30-to-4:30. Luckily we were off the ship at that time on most days. Early on you figured out you had to eliminate meals each day or you would explode.

CARTOONS:



"THE GOOD NEWS IS WE'VE ASSEMBLED A TEAM OF EXPERTS WITH THE SKILLS NECESSARY TO FIX OUR WEBSITE."



"SO THEN WE FIGURED AS LONG AS WE WERE EXHIBITING RARE BIRDS FIGHTING EXTINCTION..."



"The kitchen needs some upgrading, but you're going to love the media room!"



