

EX ALDERMAN NEWSLETTER 41

December 27, 2011

By John Hoffmann

RETIREMENT: Town and County building inspector **Bob Bodley** announced his retirement at the beginning of December. Bob was a popular figure with the residents and businesses, whether he was dealing with new construction or additions to houses. Bob was a retired battalion chief with the Community Fire Protection District in Overland and had been with Town and Country 14 years.

Bob had two successful fights with cancer in recent years, but suffered a heart attack in late July of 2011. There were some complications with his recovery. He had hoped to return to work at about the time he ultimately submitted his retirement papers.

The city has been paying the City of Rock Hill to use their building inspector on an hourly rate for the last five months.

THE CANDIDATES...SO FAR... ON THE BALLOT: On December 13, the first day of filing, three people signed up to be on the ballot for the April 2012 ballot for alderman, Steve Fons filed reelection paper work a couple of days later.

WARD 1: Dr. Dorothy Cooke 962 Delvin Drive
Richard Skip Mange 20 Roclare Lane

This should be interesting, a medical doctor running against a Christian Scientist.

Mange was the mayor who spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to send hundreds of deer off to a terrible death. Mange was with the Mariette Palmer group that in 2000 rounded up local deer and trans-located them elsewhere in the state in attempt to make T&C problem deer someone else's problem. However it turned out that most of the deer died a terrible death when their organs shut down due to shock from being captured (known as capture myopathy.)

Cooke also is against shooting of deer. While Mange is with the group that favors giving hysterectomies to deer but not to people, Cooke has not had any problems practicing medicine.

Apparently current alderwoman Nancy Avioli is not going to seek re-election since she has missed as many as three months of meetings this year. It is a shame that Nancy didn't make this decision in 2010 and let someone else serve, who actually would show up for the meetings when Maria Perron ran against her. When she did show up Nancy was usually the smartest person in the room, but often not prepared.

WARD 2: Eric Al Gerber 13482 Mason Village Court

Gerber isn't even using his full name this year. He is using his middle name instead of his first name on the ballot. Gerber is the candidate who doesn't live on an acre lot or even in a house. He has a condo in the former apartments at Mason Road just south of Clayton Road.

Gerber is a DEMOCRAT. In 2010 he was the president of the Missouri River Township Democrats. However they no longer have a website and the St. Louis County Democratic Central Committee's website does not list committeemen from the Missouri River Township.

Gerber is leading the proponent for SAVING THE DEER. This year he has proposed legislation to reduce deer harvest by sharpshooters and increase expensive surgical sterilization. He has turned his one committee assignment, the chair of the Conservation and Historic Preservation Commission, into a pro deer bully pulpit. Mayor Dalton has hidden Gerber with the other liberal Democratic weirdo wacko folks on the Conservation Commission, where the regular topic is how to stop the shooting of deer.

Gerber beat me in 2010. One of the ways he did this was to register the out of state seniors living in the dormitories the Principia high school. Al was helped onto the board of aldermen by students from around the United States that left Town and Country two months after the election. Al also carried the heavily democratic and pro-deer residents on living on the Principia campus.

It was interesting that the board of trustees of the school favored having and paid the city sharpshooters to work on the campus, while the voters living on the campus were against it. The school's board was well aware when you don't believe in the use of antibiotics, Lyme's Disease can be more than an awful disease; it can be fatal. Infected deer ticks have brought Lyme's Disease into Missouri and now in the St. Louis and West County areas. Al is doing his best to make sure it spreads by keeping an overpopulation of deer in the area.

Al is another guy who does not believe in the use of medicine for people but is okay using sedatives and surgery on deer.

On Al's 2010 website he wrote the following:

Since our city is dependent on business activity for our funding, then we must take special care to keep our businesses healthy and competitive.

At the December meeting of the Board of Aldermen Al voted against a sign variance for Vinson Mortgage, a company moving into a building in Town and Country that wanted the same type of sign variance that Rawlings, Missouri Baptist Medical Center, Scott Trade and even a store in the Town and Country Crossing Shopping Center got. Al talks about being a friend of business when running for office in a heavily Republican area but then votes against business when he gets a chance.

WARD 3: Steve Fons #5 Summerhill Lane

If Hilary Clinton describes that It Takes a Village, then Fons fills the role of the Village Idiot.

The guy is constantly uninformed and has no problem asking questions that show he does not have a clue on various city issues. He has no ability to chair or hold meetings, which is probably the reason Dalton gave him the non-voting at the fire district and the chair of the Public Relations Commission, whose duties are in reality performed by admin aide Mary Olsen.

WARD 4: Phil Behnen 322 Sunway

Phil has been a good and conscious even if he does own a Hummer. The city is likely better off if Phil stays on the board of aldermen.

THE DEER ISSUE: The deer couldn't have done a better job if they had furry four legged candidates running in the April election. Currently the break down on the deer issue is 6 for lethal control (Ward 1 Avioli & Wright; Ward 2 Welby; Ward 3 Meyland-Smith; Ward 4 Behnen and Benigas). There are two against shooting deer (Ward 2 Gerber; Ward 3 Fons).

The Ward 1 election has two deer lovers running. If Gerber and Fons are reelected that would made it 5-3 with the deer lovers gaining a vote.

The only way I would run again against Gerber is with my wife's permission. For that to happen, six people from different subdivisions would have to come to her and promise to deliver the vote in their subdivision. Frankly I don't see that happening.

Fons is beatable. Laura Chaney came within a few votes of winning in the last election. I don't think she is going to try again. Someone from Ward 3 might step up.

DEER SHOOT 2011: If you were not aware the week long deer harvest by sharpshooters hire by Town and Country began on December 26.

CITY JUDGE UP FOR CIRCUIT BENCH: Town and Country municipal court judge **Dean Waldemer** is one the three finalists to be considered to replaced Long time circuit court judge Jim Hartenbach, who was forced to retired upon reaching his 70th birthday.

The times I have monitored Waldemer's court I found that he ran a professional court room, but was just like most other municipal judges when it come to handing out no-record probation terms to drunk drivers. Waldemer's lack of toughness when it comes to DWIs was illustrated in the pages of the Post-Dispatch and on this newsletter in the case of John McGuire. http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/article_6d35f746-5c73-11df-9212-00127992bc8b.html

www.johnhoffmann.net/ex_newsletter_14.doc

McGuire was doing over 100 mph on Highway 40 and had a blood alcohol content of almost three times the legal limit, but was given a "no-record" probation by Waldemer. He was arrested 15 minutes after sentencing trying to drive off the city hall parking lot drunk. No they were not serving cocktails at city court that night. McGuire showed up for court with a .18% BAC according to a portable breath test. He later refused to take the "official" breath test in the police station.

McGuire then picked up two more DWIs, one in Chesterfield and one in Ladue. Waldemer never revoked the "no-record" probation he gave McGuire until the Post-Dispatch printed an investigative article on McGuire and the court system.

In other words if Waldemer doesn't want to keep motorists safe from drunk drivers what kind of a circuit court judge is he going to make?

FIRE DISTRICT LAID OFF...THREE WOMEN...DISTRICT BLAMES TOWN AND COUNTRY: I recently learned three women employees of the West County EMS and Fire Protection district have been laid off in 2011, the most recent just before Thanksgiving. As I was writing this, a story about this also appeared on the TownandCountryPatch.com website.

Does this sound familiar? Three women employees with Town and Country got laid off over the 2009 Christmas season. The fire district employees are all office staff including a clerk, finance director and public information officer.

BLAME TOWN AND COUNTRY: We have learned that the fire district has told the women they were being laid off because the loss revenue from the new service contract with Town and Country. I have to question this since one of them was laid off long before the contract was signed.

IN FACT...for the past decades Town and Country has paid far more than the fair and going rate for fire protection and ambulance service. It took this current recession for the city to actually negotiate a fair fire contract with WCEMSFPD. In the past it would have been much cheaper to simply operate a city fire department and end the contract with the fire district.

Mayor Jon Dalton who in 2005 was on the fire district's payroll as a lobbyist in the same year he signed a \$17.5 million bloated contract with the fire district. Dalton was signing contracts that were \$500,000 to \$1.5million a YEAR more than the cost if the city had an existing fire department.

However in 2011 the city finally signed a contract with the fire district that was about what it would cost to operate a city fire department.

Town and Country's new contract did not cost these three people their jobs.

Here is what cost them their jobs:

- Overspending on capital improvements including excessive expansion of the training facility at House #2 on Manchester Road. A lot of this was paid for by bonds but there were some normal budget costs associated with this also.
- Gross overspending for new equipment. The fire district recently purchased three new rescue rig/ambulances at the cost of about \$250,000 each. Three

regular ambulances at \$100,000 each would have netted a savings of \$450,000. The fire district will claim this comes out of the capital improvement bond issue budget. But wasting money whether it came from a bond issue or through taxes is still wasting money. .

- Bloated salaries for firefighter/paramedics caused by a firefighter union supported and controlled board of directors. Average pay for WCEMSFPD firefighters/paramedics is as much as \$35,000 more than St. Louis firefighters and \$20,000 more than Ladue firefighters.
- Finally the recession and property reassessments meant a \$300,000 loss in property taxes from residential and commercial property located in the fire district in the City of Manchester and parts of unincorporated St. Louis County. Town and Country had nothing to do with this. The \$300,000 in lost revenues would equal the three jobs lost.

When the government website of the fire district has the firefighters union seal on the banner above each page... you know something is rotten at headquarters. This fire district is not run by citizens and voters in its coverage area, but by the firefighters' union.

A HARD RAIN BUT NOT MUCH SNOW IS GOING TO FALL: At the Board of Aldermen meeting on December 12, the Board of Aldermen voted to add \$50,000 to the 2011 snow removal budget based on a weather prediction for heavy snow. I wrote in the last newsletter that I didn't know what weather forecaster Public Works Director Craig Wilde or bill sponsor Tim Welby were listening to. All the weather forecasters I heard or read were not calling for any heavy snow in December.

After the bill passed the 10-day forecast through December 23, turned out to be accurate...no snow. There was an inch of wet snow in the area on Tuesday 12/27, but no heavy snow and for the rest of the year with the forecast for temperatures in the 50s. Heck even Hidden Valley can't make heavy snow with a forecast like that.

In fairness, heavy pre-Christmas snows missed us by 245 miles to the west and 180 miles to the north. But I think this cash infusion has more than meets the eye.

The rest of the story or watch pea under the shell: The \$50,000 increased the 2011 snow removal budget from \$220,000 to \$270,000. However, the 2012 budget which overall is \$355,000 in the red, calls for just \$150,000 for snow removal.

IN 2010 the city spent \$199,356 on snow removal. For 2011 they now have \$270,000 for snow removal. So what make Mayor Dalton or the Aldermen think 2012 we will have less snow and only need \$150,000 or 45% less than 2011?

It is clear to me they intentionally low-balled snow removal in the 2012 budget to keep the overall deficit number down. The \$50,000 to December was actually a ploy to put move money in the 2012 budget by adding unnecessary money at the 2011. It is a shell game to make the 2012 budget look better.

2011 is already a lost year. According to the last budget sheets I received we were going to end the year with a \$1,273,813 deficit. Now that will be \$50,000 more to the 2011 deficit, but that money will likely find its way onto the 2012 books.

FATHER TIME IS KNOCKING: Just for fun below is one of my columns this week for the Chesterfield Patch, an AOL website.

Father Time Is Hot On The Trail

Happy New Year, from an Old Fart.

By John Hoffmann



Last year, I wrote [an end-of-the-year column about how New Year's is a good time to remember](#) how old you are.

In 2010 I wrote about still calling Schnucks grocery, Schnuckendorf's—since I will always consider Bettendorf's the top St. Louis supermarket—even though then number-two Schnucks bought them out in 1970.

I also wrote how three college students who sit courtside with me at the officials' table, had never heard of the *Smothers Brothers*.

In 2011 there are a number of things that *Father Time* used to slap me in the face—a reality check—this year.

A DISTANT MELODY

On the way to a basketball game, I was listening to a radio station that begins playing Christmas tunes on November 1. I made a mental note of the last four holiday songs I heard.

Once at the gym, I asked a new group of college kids working with me if they had heard of Bing Crosby, Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme, Nat King Cole or Johnny Mathias. One said he *thought* he had heard of Nat King Cole, but didn't know who he was.

SATURDAY MORNINGS ARE NOT THE SAME

During the promotion of the new book *Rin Tin Tin*, author Susan Orlean, mentioned the career of Rin Tin Tin and the most recent starring role of Rin Tin Tin's progeny, which according to Orlean was “the little remembered television series.”

Little remembered?! Who doesn't remember young orphan Rusty, adopted by the U.S. Cavalry and his German Shepherd dog (Rin Tin Tin) at Fort Apache?

Nevermind that the TV show ran from 1954-1959 and was set in the 1870's—just 50 years before any German Shepherds reached the shores of the USA.

Saying *Rin Tin Tin* was “little remembered” is like saying, nobody remembers *Sky King* (Out of the western sky comes *Sky King*), *Fury* (the story of a horse and the boy who loved him) or *Sgt. Preston of the Yukon* (On King! On you huskies!)

But, as it turns out, very few apparently remember these shows.

When I recently rented a car in Skagway, Alaska and drove to Whitehorse, the capital of the Yukon Territory, a Canadian border customs officer asked the purpose of my trip. I quickly explained that I grew up watching *Sgt. Preston of the Yukon* and wanted to see the Yukon Territory. Even the Canadian customs officer hadn't heard of *Sgt. Preston*.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

At a recent basketball game, where I was seated at the scorer's table, I asked a young man playing music during timeouts if he had any music I might recognize. His answer was that he had music selections all the way back to the '90s.

The young man then asked if I was talking about *classical* music. I answered, sure, the *Ode to Joy* portion for *Beethoven's Ninth Symphony* would be great when the team took a late lead or at the end of a win.

He interrupted to say: "When I say 'classical' I mean like The Temptations."

DIFFERENT MEMORIES

I read online in *The Washington Post* where longtime Massachusetts U.S. Rep. Barney Frank announced he was not running for reelection. The report said Frank was best known for his work on the Finance Committee and as a supporter of gay issues.

Well, I always thought Frank was best known for the gay male prostitute who was living in the basement of his Capitol Hill townhouse?

But that being the case, I suppose it would be pointless to mention Fannie Fox, Wilbur Mills and Washington, D.C.'s Tidal Basin. A response from the majority of people to that would be "Who, Who and What?"

SHOPPING THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY, AGAIN

The world has come full circle? I remember growing up that besides a trip to the supermarket, there were trips to a butcher shop and bakeries, and a trip to the 905 liquor store. 905? By 1970, you could get everything in one stop.

However, the other day I found myself going to [Whole Foods](#) to pick up a steak and chocolate chip scones, to [Schnucks](#) for Honey Crisp apples and string beans, then to Wal Mart for frozen and canned goods. A week later, I was at the Dierbergs deli counter for oven-roasted turkey, then to Costco for a big tray of shrimp.

It's 2011, but I'm driving around to different stores like it's 1955. In some ways, I like that.

ONE LESS THING TO DO ON NEW YEAR'S DAY

My entire life so far—which includes 58 New Year's Days—the Clydesdales have pulled the St. Louis float in the Rose Parade. As a kid, I would watch the parade every year until the Clydesdales pranced on and off the TV screen.

As a teenager and young adult, I wouldn't watch the parade, but when I walked through a room with a TV on, I'd asked, "Have the Clydesdales been on yet?"

Then, in middle age (and almost retirement) on New Year's Day, I would sit down with the morning newspaper (nearly a memory) and turn on the parade—now shown without commercials on HGTV—and keep an ear out for the announcement about the Clydesdales.

But now that *In-Bev* decided the Clydesdales will not be in the Rose Parade, I guess that will be yet another distant memory—like *Rin Tin Tin* and *Sgt. Preston of the Yukon*.

And another year passes.

About this column: John Hoffmann offers commentary on issues big and small impacting Chesterfield.

CARTOONS:









