

EX ALDERMAN NEWSLETTER 60

August 22, 2012 12:01am

By John Hoffmann

THE SCHOOL AT THE ABANDONED AMONTE SUBDIVISION: At the last Planning and Zoning meeting Ilya Eydelman who owns the Raintree Learning Community School for three through six- year olds, currently in Ballwin, made a presentation concerning building a 7,200 square foot school on the Amonte property located on S. Mason Road.

While the next door neighbor and a trustee from the Laurel Lakes subdivision spoke in favor of the building, a number of people spoke against it, including Alderman Chuck Lenz and former Alderman Bill Kuehling.

While the city zoning ordinances allow any Kindergarten through 12th grade school in any zoned area, Kuehling brought up the point that the school serves pre-kindergarteners meaning it would require a special use permit to be operated. Kuehling stated that the school seemed to be a day care center as much as a school.

The case was continued until Wednesday August 29.

I met with Eydelman about 10 days ago and asked some questions about the project.

First the plans for the school would use all seven Amonte lots. He will have to rebuild the storm water system. The school would be built on top of where the cul-de-sac is now.

When asked about the comparison to a day care center, Eydelman laid out these primary differences as to why the school is not a daycare operation.

- * The school year is for 10 months from mid August to June.
- * While there are pre-school and after school activities offered from 7-9 and 3-6, the school day is from 9-to-3. There are no "hourly drop offs."
- * His staff all have teaching degrees, some with masters degrees and are paid about the same as teachers with the Parkway and Rockwood School District.
- * **The tuition is \$10,900 for the 10-month regular school year.** There is an additional tuition for "summer school."

Here is the dilemma : Currently the subdivision has seven vacant lots since 2006. There has been no interest from home builders to buy the property because the lots are very unusual and involve property on the side of a steep hill. The land was available before the recession with no interest from builders, probably because most of the one-acre lots are partially on rock and partially over air along a cliff side.

In its current condition, the street has collapsed and the storm water system has failed. People have been dumping on the property including old sofas and bags of trash.

The construction of the school and rebuilding of the road would be an improvement over abandoned property.

On the other side of the coin is a for-profit school with 70 students, plus staff that would be dropped onto Mason Road in an area zoned for houses. Parents dropping off and picking up kids, plus staff arriving and leaving would result in a slight increase of vehicles entering and exiting the property compared to if seven homes had been built.

The other concern is what happens if the school goes broke and there is an abandoned building. This of course raises the question...What is better, an abandoned un-built subdivision with a collapsing street and storm water system or \$2,000,000 in construction improvements including a 7,200 sq foot building?



View approaching school



Walkway to front door



Side view of proposed school

TOUR de THORNHILL: I am well aware that bicyclists have a right to the road as much of drivers of motor vehicles. However, I am also aware that bicyclists are subject to the same traffic laws as us drivers. I always try and give some extra room to bicyclists and do not normally hate the bicyclists on Clayton Road, with one big exception. .

Last week my wife and I had the dogs loaded up and we were headed to Drace Park. I was driving eastbound on Thornhill Drive and came to a stop at the stop sign at Thornhill and High Oak on the left and Barrett Station Road on the right.

Down the hill going westbound was a pack of about 40 or more bicyclists riding two and three abreast. They were doing 25 mph or more. Instead of stopping, the pack at speed made a left turn in front of me, went up Barrett Station Road and around a closed gate.

After they cleared I drove on and at the next stop sign at Karlin Street a similar size pack of bicyclists were running the stop sign there. Once I got to Topping there were about 12 stragglers.

I have to wonder what an unannounced but planned group of as many as 80 bicyclists is doing invading a subdivision. I can see disaster ahead with kids on bikes, pets, people walking or walking their dogs tangling with this group. If they want to continue they need to obey the traffic laws such as speed limits and stop signs. I know this is asking a lot but it would be nice if the local police put a stop to this reckless behavior.

TWO NEW MEMBERS TO THE GANGS OF TOWN AND COUNTRY: Just when you think our local criminals have settled down, two new ones pop up. In this case they are both repeat offenders. One of them even has a name that you might recognize.

Serial Drunk Driver: Keep in mind in the case of our first new member, I was aware of his first DWI in 2012 during the overnight hours on New Year's day and did not mention it because it was a first DWI and I did not want anyone to think I was picking on him because of who he was related to. However, when six months later he again was picked up for his second DWI, again driving dad's leased Audi, it was impossible to ignore. I would be writing about this regardless who the person was, but the fact it is Jonathan Forrest Dalton, Jr. the son of Mayor/Cigarette Lobbyist Jon Dalton is mere happenstance.

First DWI: The Ladue Police spotted 22-year-old Dartmouth senior Jonathan Dalton, Jr. westbound on Clayton east of McKnight at 3:35AM on New Year's Day driving without his lights on. The police watched as Dalton ran the stop sign at Price Road and then stopped him.

Officer J. Wood reported there was a strong smell of intoxicants about Dalton, his eyes were glassy and watery, his speech was confused, and he was swaying as he stood.

Dalton first said he was coming home from being with his father at the Old Warson Country Club. He later told police he had left his father at Old Warson, went to one friend's party and was now going to another party according to the police report.

The report states Dalton declined to take a breath test until he called his father/lawyer Jon Dalton, Sr. Officer Wood reported that senior Dalton said he would be right there but after 20 minutes he was still not there and Junior refused to take the breath test without his father present, so an Implied Consent Refusal was completed, Dalton's license was seized and a temporary license was issued.

Found in the 2011 black Audi A-5 leased to senior Dalton by VW Leasing were a 750 ML bottle of rum, a 1.75 liter bottle of bourbon and a 1.75 liter bottle of vodka. If nothing else young Dalton was ready to party.

Second DWI: On June 23, 2012 at 2:48AM with the Lewis-Rice Law firm handling his pending DWI and driver license revocation, young Dalton was driving in the Audi westbound on I-64 at McKnight. Ladue Police Officer S. Manasco looked in his rearview mirror and saw the approaching car that he believed was speeding. The moving radar unit in the police car clocked Dalton driving 73MPH in a 60 MPH zone.

Officer Manasco reported that when he first contacted Dalton, before Dalton spoke he let out a loud belch.

When asked where he was going Dalton told the police he was “getting some fried chick peas.”

From Officer Manasco’s observations Dalton may have been more intoxicated in this case than the first one. He reported Dalton had a “strong” odor of alcoholic beverage about him. This time his eyes were bloodshot and glassy. His balance was uncertain and swaying, while his speech was both slurred and confused.

He was arrested for DWI and he again refused to take a breath test.

Usually someone who just got a DWI and is awaiting the court outcome are cautious about their actions. Once a year has passed and they are off probation they are more likely to let down their guard and pick up another DWI. Not so in this case. Even our other serial DWI offender, Dan McLaughlin had 13 months between DWI arrests.

Conflict of Interest Gone: The Ladue Municipal Court Judge is Keith Cheung. He used to be the Town and Country city prosecutor until he was disciplined by the Supreme Court and left the position.

Cheung is also a principal with the law firm that represents Town and Country; Curtis, Heinz, Garrett and O’Keefe. Three of the named partners all handle Town and Country business.

Cheung removed himself from both cases within one month of the cases being filed. They will be heard by Frank Vatterott, Ladue’s Provisional Judge.

Pity the Poor Cops: Dalton, Jr.'s lawyer, Mark Sowers of Lewis-Rice of course has petitions in the Associate Circuit Court claiming that the police lied and had no reason to arrest young Dalton and his license should not be revoked for one year. You would think that after going through the drill once young Dalton would be up to speed.

If you want to see a copy of the police reports drop me an email and I'll forward them to you.

Be Warned! If you happen to be out late and seen a newer black Audi four-door in the area of Highway 40/I-64, Clayton or Topping Roads, you might want to give it a wide berth.

REPEAT SEX OFFENDER: Marco Castaneda is stupid and apparently has a very strong compulsion. Castaneda was arrested on June 19 in Town and Country after exposing himself to a young woman in the office building at 763 South New Ballas Road.

Less than two months later on August 16 later while in his yard at 582 Pinebrook Court (Ward 4) he allegedly was exposed himself to a teenage girl in the yard next door.

Castaneda apparently believes that with all the large lots in Town and Country no one knows their neighbor. He was wrong.

His other mistake was to commit a second sex offense in the same police jurisdiction where they have a recent mug shot of you and recently added you to a sex offender watch list.

THE CURRENT LIST OF THE GANGS OF TOWN AND COUNTRY:

Gangs of Town and Country

S&K Investment **Ponzi Scheme Federal and State Fraud Convictions:** Richard Neiswonger (Ward 1)
Carl Kossmeyer (Ward 4)

Embezzler of church bulletin payments convicted: John Gehm (Ward 3)

Investment Embezzler convicted: Don Weir (Ward 3)

Embezzled \$25,000 from Homeowners Association convicted: Richard Burbott (Ward 2)

Mortgage Fraud: John Mineo, Jr. general manager of Mineo's Restaurant, convicted (Ward 2)

Serial Child Molester: Convicted Eric Tolen (Ward 1) Post Oak Drive.

Drug Dealer: Brian Marchant-Calsyn convicted and served time in the federal Prison in Lewisburg, PA. Marchant-Calsyn later joined Neiswonger and Kossmeyer as a salesman for the S&K Investment Ponzi Scheme. He then created numerous internet sales companies that resulted in complaints to the Attorney General by the dozen and lawsuits alleging fraud. Numerous judgments were issued against him and his companies. He moved out of his home on Topping Road in May of 2012. (Ward 2)

Sex assault: No charges filed but T&C police investigation led to the resignation of the president of Maryville University in 2006 (Ward 4)

Bank Fraud, weapons violation, drug dealing assault and spousal abuse and FBI informant that led to the downfall of State Senator Jeff Smith, convicted: Milton Ohslen III, (Ward 1)

Medicaid Fraud: Dr. Abdul Naushad and his wife Wajiha Naushad civil award (Ward 4)

Felony Sexual Assault Second Degree convicted: Stanley Williams, AKA Tommy Williams AKA Stanley Carter. Thornhill Drive Thornhill Hill Estates Subdivision (Ward 2)

Federal Income Evasion: Convicted William Bialczak Ward 1, skimmed \$1,000,000 from his businesses S&H Parking and Metropolitan Towing, at the center of the St. Louis Police Tow Scandal. Feds seized \$874,978 in cash during searches of his businesses.

Burglar: Graham Redington of the 1600 block of Foxleigh Ct. (Ward 2) was arrested on March 24, 2011 after burglarizing a house on Horton Lane and then carrying a large flat screen TV and computer through the woods to a waiting car on Kent Manor Lane.

Bank Fraud: Doug Morgan, 65, who lived in the Thornhill Estates subdivision (Ward 2), died on the day (Nov 9, 2011) of a scheduled hearing before a Federal judge. Morgan had been charged with Bank Fraud after allegedly making fraudulent loan applications for \$1.5 million. He is alleged to have also solicited close to \$2 million from two persons claiming to be a secret partner for a new casino in North County. Morgan was also the former head of the St. Louis Planning Commission.

Serial Drunk Driver: Dan McLaughlin, residing in Ward 1 off of Ballas Road. McLaughlin refused to take a breath test in August of 2010 after Chesterfield Police responded to calls from motorists on Highway 40 about McLaughlin's SUV weaving. The police report indicates that it appeared that McLaughlin urinated in his pants, was falling down drunk, asked to be let go since he was only a few blocks from home (several miles actually), and offered the officer. In September of 2011 McLaughlin had multiple accidents on Baxter Road. He was so drunk that he could not figure out how to open his door, could not dial a phone, was falling down drunk and again refused to take a breath test.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTING VIOLATIONS: Alderman Tim Welby was fined and placed on two years' probation by the Missouri Ethics Commission for failing to file required campaign contributor and expense reports for over three years. Prior to the action, Welby had received a written warning for violations.

Criminal-Illegal Importation of Prescription Drugs...Civil-Medicaid & Medicare Fraud Dr. Abid Nisar of the Thornhill Estates subdivision. (Ward 2) Convicted

POSSESSION OF HEROIN AND DWI PRIOR OFFENDER: Andrew Baird of 11 Bellerive Country Club Grounds Possession of Heroin and DWI by Prior Offender in the Pebble Acres subdivision at 3:40am on 3/25/12.

INVESTMENT FRAUD PONZI SCHEME: On July 19, 2012 61-year-old Grahame Rhodes of 13301 Thornhill Drive (Ward 2) was indicted by a Federal grand Jury for a \$2.5 million investment fraud/Ponzi scheme. Victims included friends and neighbors.

Serial Drunk Driver: Jonathan Forrest Dalton, Jr., 22, of Tundra Court (Ward 1) was arrested for DWI on January 1, 2012 at 3:35AM driving down Clayton Road in Ladue with no lights on his 2011 Audi. He then ran a stop sign in front of a Ladue police officer. He appeared to be drunk and refused to take a breath test. Police found three bottles of booze in the car. Less than six months later while his first arrest was pending in court on June 23, at 2:48AM he was clocked speeding by the Ladue Police on I-64. He again appeared intoxicated, was arrested and refused to take a breath test.

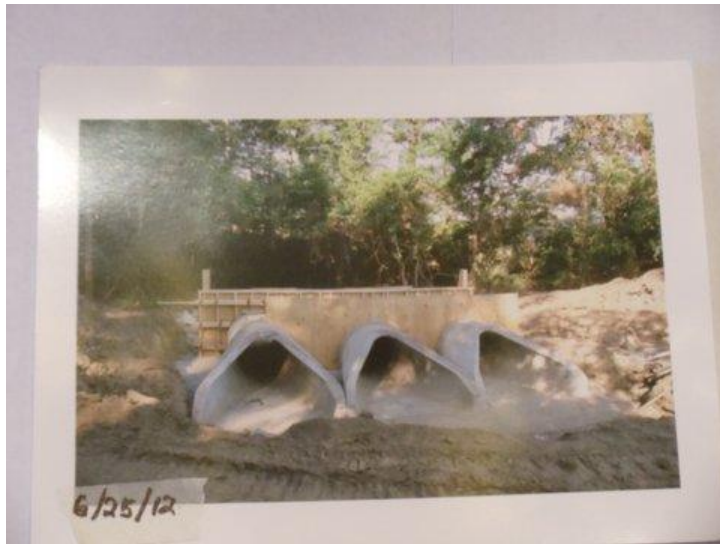
Serial Sex Offender: Marco Castandeda, 63, of 582 Pinebrook Court (Ward 4) was arrested exposing himself to a young woman in the office building at 763 South New Ballas. With that case pending Castandeda was arrested again on August 16 for exposing himself to a girl in the next door yard.

THE MO BAPTIST FITNESS TRAIL: The asphalt is down for the fitness trail from the southwestern parking lot at Missouri Baptist Medical Center to Clayton Road. I walked it on August 10 and took some photos. Since then additional work has been done. George Stock the consulting engineer for Mo Bap has stated the trail should be completed by the end of August.

The asphalt for the trail was no huge expense. However the infrastructure sure was. Storm water was an issue and MSD requirements didn't come cheap. There are large culverts to handle storm water. Clayton Road is on a ridgeline and water drains toward the area. There has been a large culvert under I-270 for water to reach a creek on the west side of the interstate.

At first glance the culvert and drainage pipes looked to be overkill, but in the event of a 4-inch rain like we saw several years ago when the remains of a Gulf hurricane hit the St. Louis area, without the oversized storm-water pipes the trail would likely to washed away.

Missouri Baptist has bought up all but two of the houses on Glenmaro Lane. Some think in the next 10 or 20 years they would like to run a road connecting the hospital to Clayton Road. Mo Bap agreed to maintain the trail for at least seven years. I would not be surprised to see an attempt to build a road once they own all the property on Glenmaro.



Storm Water channels under the trail



An older existing pipe that carries storm water from nearby subdivisions to the area



Large rocks placed in a storm water culvert to avoid erosion



The trail just after the asphalt was put down and before landscaping. The trail splits with pavement on the east side and west side of these trees.



The trail along the I-270 right away puts walkers directly against property owners. Mo Bap owns all the house along this section of trail except one.

MISSING PHOTO CAPER: The other day I stopped by Ellie Bush's house at 7 Kirken Knoll. It was on July 26 when Ellie called the police accusing the city administrator/police chief John Copeland of stealing a number of photographs she had taken documenting the construction of the "fitness trail" being built by Missouri Baptist Hospital while he was at her house.

Back in 2002 there was some grading done by Missouri Baptist to land located next to Bush's home. After that her yard began to suffer water problems that eventually reached her basement. She started battling mold, Missouri Baptist and City Hall for not overseeing the activity of Missouri Baptist.

When I stepped into Bush's house the smell of mold was overpowering. It was much more noticeable than when I was last there in 2009. Over the last few years Ellie has suffered from respiratory infections on a regular basis. I am not surprised.

The illnesses had laid 77-year-old Ellie low for the last couple of years, but now she is ready to fight. She believes that Missouri Baptist's actions have damaged her home so much that it is impossible to sell it.

She has tried to get Mayor Jon "Snidely" Dalton, city engineer Craig Wilde and Ward-1 alderman Skip Mange to her house. Instead John Copeland was sent.

After Copeland left on July 26 and Bush called the police claiming the chief of police had stolen photos. A police officer was not dispatched. Instead Lt. Kranz, the chief of detectives and another detective went to Bush's home. They wrote a six-page report. They did not classify the event as a "Theft" but merely as "Missing Photos."

Bush followed up the original report with a two page small-font typed statement that had little to do with the missing photos and a lot to do with the damage to her house and the actions of city officials. She is clearly trying to tell her story through public records.

She complained of construction beginning before 7am in violation of the local ordinance. She also complained of her treatment nine years ago, by then Alderman John Diehl up to now and Jon Dalton doing nothing as her property was ruined.

In her statement Bush further complained about the scope of the construction for a mere trail. She wrote,

"Mr. Copeland stated, "I see nothing over here inconsistent with a trail." To which I replied, 'That is such bullshit.'"

Attached to the statement was a three page email she wrote to Dalton on July 23 about the problems.

DO I THINK MO BAPTIST DAMAGED HER PROPERTY? Yes I do. That house was built around 1960 several years before Missouri Baptist bought the old Missouri Highway Patrol and Missouri Highway Department buildings and broke ground. She had no water issues for 42 years and immediately after grading by Missouri Baptist the standing water began.

DO I THINK JOHN COPELAND STOLE HER PHOTOGRAPHS? No I don't. What would the point be? To get rid of the photo images he would have also had to have stolen the digital memory card from her camera.

John and I used to work together as police officers and often worked on the same cases when I was a detective and he was a patrol officer in Rock Hill. We remained friendly over the next 28 years up until I was elected to the Board of Aldermen in 2008.

Suddenly John became a real snake. Every time I would write a bill that would have impact or effect the police department I would send him a copy of it weeks in advance and ask for him to review it and give me his thoughts before I presented the bill. I would never hear from him.

Then when I was presenting the bill (such was cell phone and texting bans while driving or resolutions to take action against bars that violated the city liquor laws or resolutions to cite ex-convict Brian Marchant-Calsyn for operating his business from an office in Town and Country for three years without a business license) Dalton would ask Copeland what he thought of my bill or resolution and Copeland would proceed to bad mouth it for five minutes.

So do I like or respect Copeland? No. Do I think he snatched Mrs. Bush's photos?...No I don't think he did that.

MANGE WANTS TO RASIE TAXES AGAIN: Skip Mange is the former mayor of Town and Country, a two-term County councilman and since April is back at ground zero of Snoburbia on the board of aldermen in Town and Country.

Skip is unique as he claims he is a Republican but loves creating new taxes and making recommendations on doing things taxpayers are against. Here is what he has done recently.



Emergency Dispatching: Three years ago Democratic County Executive Charlie Dooley got him to head a committee for the 9-1-1 Sales Tax. Mange sold the need for this tax because the FCC was requiring a change in police and fire frequencies nationwide that would be quite an expense to local government. The tax was touted to pay for required technical upgrades. However, there was no sunset on this tax. Once the upgrades were made you would still be paying and paying. The public, quick to support police officers and firefighters passed the tax.

Part of the deal of running a police or fire department is that you have to provide someone to answer the phone and dispatch the troops. That was a basic part of providing public safety. If a city could not afford to provide or contract for dispatching they needed to look at disbanding and let the County do it.

Now all those small cities with five and six officers police department along Natural Bridge Road that offer substandard police service have just had a sizeable portion of their budget costs vanish thanks to Skip's hard work. With no sunset provision on this tax, Skip Mange is helping to continue unprofessional police services in parts of St. Louis County.

City Park: Two years ago, Town and Country Mayor Jon Dalton, a noted cigarette lobbyist who was behind the use of eminent domain to steal widow Opal Henderson's business and property on S. Broadway for a nightclub district that never got built, followed Dooley's lead and put Skip as the head of a committee. This time the mission was to expand a parking lot at a popular city park down the throats of citizens who don't want it. Opposition was overwhelming at public hearings. Manage did not care.

The project is proceeding forward at the cost of over \$100,000 in a combination of sales tax money from a regional parks fund and a special city parks tax.

County Parks: Since February of 2012 Skip has headed a County Parks funding advisory committee. He was appointed by County Executive Charlie Dooley. Guess what? Mange's committee recommends a tax increase for the Parks. It turns out that Mange was not opened minded when reviewing the options. In November of 2011 prior to being appointed he sent Dooley an e-mail reminding Dooley that when he and Dooley were co-chairs of the last Parks committee they floated a tax increase that almost passed at the polls. They should try it again. Threatening to close parks unless a new tax is passed is easy. Cutting unnecessary spending such as patronage jobs created for Dooley's former campaign staff from the entire County budget is politically tougher but the better way to go.

Mange woke on Sunday morning August 12 to find he was the center of Post-Dispatch editorial claiming collusion with Dooley in recommending the tax increase.

http://www.stltoday.com/news/opinion/columns/the-platform/editorial-dooley-should-stop-playing-with-the-county-s-parks/article_ea96f437-9531-5509-837b-36858f4e6997.html

Now even Dooley's spokesman questions if there will be a deficit in the 2013 Parks budget and a need to raise taxes.

MANGE'S PLANS FOR CONSERVATION COMMISSION INVOLVES SPENDING

MILLIONS: The Conservation and Historical Preservation Commission met on Wednesday the August 15. Much like the other unneeded commissions, the Community

Relations Commission and Green Team Commission, Conservation did not have a quorum at the scheduled start of the meeting.

At the scheduled start of the meeting Skip was there along with Parks Director Anne Nixon, members Mariette Palmer and member Don Barr. There were two short for a quorum. At 6:35 new member Susan Blake from Ward 4 arrived. At 6:37 the other newly appointed member Todd Abrams, publisher of County Living Magazine arrived. At last a quorum!

At 6:41 Hera Gerber, who has been late to every Conservation meeting I have ever attended, arrived.

Alderman report: Skip gave the members a rundown of recent activity with the Board of Aldermen giving it a very favorable spin. Here is an example:

“The Clayton Road project is moving ahead at a nice pace.” In fact it is almost a year behind the original schedule.

Mariette Palmer tried to hijack the meeting for a moment and asked Skip to tell them about the kindergarten/pre-school that wants to go into the Amonte subdivision off of Mason Road. Palmer is clearly against school and began spouting off non-truths and half-truths until Mange told her to stop.

SKIP’S MONEY PIT IS REVEALED: Mange announced that he had three possible projects for the Conservation Commission. Please remember this is our second year that we started the year with a deficit budget and the next two years are projected to be deficits also.

1) Skip wants to look at buying the 2,310 square foot Frank Lloyd Wright designed home located behind the Mason Ridge School. Of course the Pappas family does not even have the house for sale. But Skip said that Ted Pappas died and he thinks surely widow Bette Papas or the family would want to sell the house. Of course he has not talked to anyone with the Pappas family to see if they intend to sell the house.

The other issue Skip did not bring up is the certain necessity to rehab the house. Frank Lloyd Wright designs called for building material that often had to be replaced or extensively rehabbed after 50 of 60 years.

Skip did admit that the city would need to try and grants money and help from the Frank Lloyd Wright foundation.

Our estimated cost: \$1.5m-\$2m

2) Next on Skippy's list is the property at 13348 Conway Road. Mange explained that the house and 1 acre lot is for sale for \$425,000. He added that the house was built around an old log cabin. Skip added that there is a thought that the existing house maybe a "tear down." He would like to save the log cabin and move it to Drace Park.

He then admitted that the other log cabin at Drace Park that you can walk through was extensively rebuilt using modern logs to replace all the ones that were so rotten you could poke your finger through them. In other words the current log cabin is basically a phony. (He did not mention the log house at the park next to the two room cabin, which most feel is not historically sufficient and was built in the 20th century.) This house sits empty and rotting away. The first floor could be used for office or meeting room space.

Mange suggested the transplanted log cabin, likely with mostly replaced logs, could be placed where the garden plots had been at Drace.

"Oh, that would be wonderful. It would be just like a village," exclaimed Mariette Palmer.

Our estimated cost: \$500,000-\$1m

3) Mange's third and current final project on his list is to buy the 18.4 acre Horan property at 13428 Conway Road currently for sale for \$4m. The house on the lot is by famous American contemporary architect William Bernoudy, someone who Mange has never heard of. (Bernoudy was a disciple of Frank Lloyd Wright. Bernoudy joined by Ralph Fournier were the most well know architects of the American contemporary style of architecture in St. Louis. Mange also has not heard of Fournier who like Bernoudy has designed several homes in Town and Country.)

Mange wants to turn this property into a city park as Ward-4 does not have a park.

Besides the purchase price for the property, there is the added cost of building the park infrastructure, rehabbing the house for public use and finding a use for the house.

The city currently can't rent out the \$1.5 million Longview Farmhouse addition. It doesn't use the house at Drace Park and now Skip wants to add another structure.

The excuse to buy this property is that there is no park in Ward-4. No one ever mentions that Queeny Park and its 569 acres of land are surrounded on three sides by Town and Country.

Our estimated cost: \$6,500,000

The city is in a deficit budget this year and is projected to remain in the deficit for the next two years due to increased costs and flat revenue. But here is a city leader recommending we spend close to \$10,000,000 on adding, developing and maintaining land and buildings.

Of course the city has shown it is having trouble maintaining the current park property it owns. (see our next story).

Perhaps someone should remind Mr. Mange the primary duties of a city government is to provide police, fire, EMS, service, plus roads, snowplowing, zoning control and a manageable parks system...not large scale unneeded land acquisitions.

TENNIS BACKBAORDS ARE CRUMBLING: We mentioned that about six weeks ago Mariette Palmer did what she always does; she spoke at a Board of Aldermen meeting. Instead of a rambling save-the-deer or spend lots of money, Palmer stated that her husband, Dickie Palmer, who is a regular tennis player, asked her to report that the backboards to practice volleying against at Longview Park are falling apart.

Parks Director Anne Nixon was not present at the meeting and Mayor/Cigarette Lobbyist Jon "Snidely" Dalton stated that the information would be passed along to Nixon, but he thought she probably already knew about it.

Nixon has to drive past the tennis court and backboard every time she comes to and leaves work. If she knew anything about the bad condition of the backboard she is keeping it a secret.

We stopped by the park last week and snapped a photo of the backboard last week a month after Palmer's complaint..



AKIN: WILL STUPID STATEMENTS GIVE MCCASKILL AN EDGE: A year ago Todd Akin said in a radio interview how he thought liberals hated God. If you think of all the liberal Jesuits, nuns, Episcopal ministers who clearly believe in God, you have to wonder how a five-term congressman could say something that stupid.

The statement certainly didn't have any effect on Akin, as he upset John Brunner and won the Republican primary. Many have written how McCaskill wanted Akin to win. While Akin had a slight edge in polls over McCaskill it was less than polls showed Brunner or Sarah Steelman having over McCaskill.

When Todd won the primary he thanked God for the victory. My first thought was to wonder how much God really cares about primary elections. My second thought was Akin's comment reminded me of Norte Dame versus Boston College. Whose side is God on in that contest?

You would think being ahead in the polls, a good move for Akin would be to keep his mouth shut, especially since he has a habit of making Joe Biden-like statements on occasion. He didn't, he said he thought it was a good idea for the Federal government to stop funding the school lunch program.

Getting rid of the department of Education is one thing, taking food out of the mouths of poor children is another. Harry Truman signed legislation for school lunch aide long before the Department of Education was thought of by the Carter Administration and began operating shortly before the election of Ronald Reagan.

Then came Akin's remarks while being interviewed by Charles Jaco, when he said "Legitimate Rape doesn't cause Pregnancy." He went on to say very incorrectly how a woman's body shuts down due to the trauma of rape making pregnancy less likely to occur.

Akin later issued a press release saying he "misspoke." Watching the interview, he didn't appear to misspeak to me.

When you have the lead in the polls, why do you want to do interviews, especially if you have a history of "misspeaking?" Why not let McCaskill attack you and pick up more votes from people you hate negative ads?

I have to think some people, especially women who were not sure who to vote for, may have had their minds made up on Sunday.

The article in the Post-Dispatch at 1am on August 20 had six comments. A similar article about the interview in the Washington Post at 1am had garnered 2,973 comments.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/wp/2012/08/19/todd-akin-gop-senate-candidate-legitimate-rape-rarely-causes-pregnancy/?hpid=z2>

By dawn on Monday GOP insiders and commentators were calling for Akin to step down. Almost everyone was calling for Akin to step down except one person, Sen. Claire McCaskill.

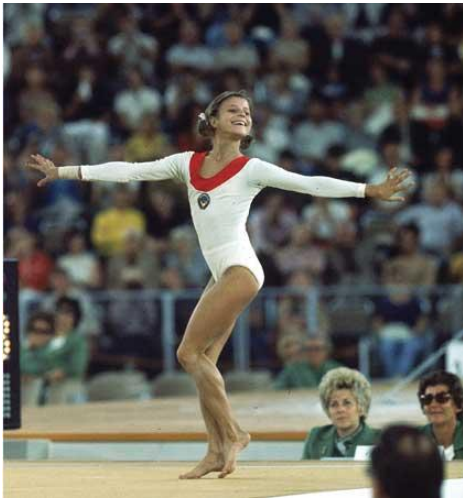
I MISS THE OLD OLYMPICS: Call me old fashion but I miss the Olympics that occurred prior to November 9, 1989, the day protesters began making holes in the Berlin Wall.

Spending five years working part time on the sports desk of large metropolitan newspaper and then covering college and professional sports on the East Coast you find yourself rooting for the underdog. It is purely selfish, more people are likely to read your article if it involves an upset. There is an old saying of "No rooting in the press box." This rule was created when too many locals working in the press box began cheering loudly for the home team.

Of course there is always an exception to a rule. The exception to this one is if late in a game you have already started writing your story, it can be okay to "root for the lead" you just wrote if you do it quietly. But let's face it rooting for the underdog in the United States is as American as apple pie.

Back in the old days the United States was almost always an underdog. The Russians and East Germans were normally the favorites unless it was gymnastics, then the Romanians were also heavily favored.

Back in the old days Olga Korbut and then Nadia Comaneci had a better chance of being on a box of Wheaties before an American gymnast won a gold medal. Of course Korbut and Comaneci both moved to the United States. Comaneci, perhaps remembered more for some white trash photo ops in Florida after her defection, married American gymnast gold medalist, Bart Connors and now lives in Oklahoma.



Back in 1972 Olga Korbut was young but not a midget like most of the gymnasts winning medals in 2012.



Nadia Comaneci back in the old days.

In the old days, myself and rest of the free world were all rooting for Team USA or any other member of NATO to beat the Eastern Bloc. We had our track stars and an occasional swimmer but usually finished third in the medal count.

Things have changed. Now everyone in the world is rooting against TEAM USA. The poor Russians are now the underdogs. I stopped paying close attention to the Summer Olympics when they dropped baseball and added beach volleyball as a medal sport.

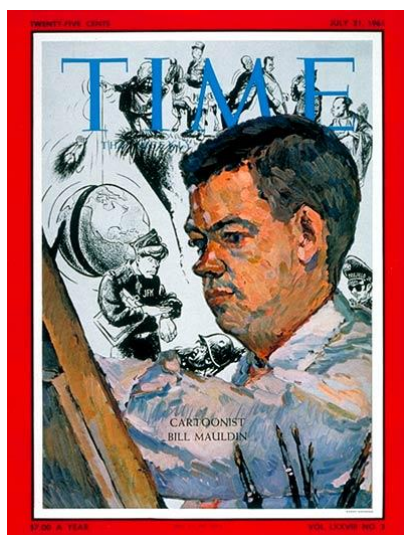
With the winter Olympics at least in the luge, curling and ski jumping I can still root for the Americans and the underdogs at the same time.

MEDIA WATCH:

Post-Dispatch is looking less and less like a newspaper. The classified /real estate section for over a year has been putting up paid advertisements that look like articles for the Rivera of Warren County...also known as Innsbrook. Start keeping track yourself. At least once a week there is an ad that looks like an article touting the lifestyle and wonderful homes at Innsbrook.

SAY GOODBYE TO A DAILY LOCAL EDITORIAL CARTOON: It is hard to imagine that I live in such a small city where there is no longer a daily newspaper editorial cartoonist. On July 27 the Post-Dispatch laid off R.J. Matson who drew the daily editorial cartoon plus the Friday cartoon where readers submitted a caption. Matson and a number of other editors and reports got the ax. You have to wonder how much longer before the Weather Bird gets a pink slip.

Daniel Fitzpatrick for 45 years drew political cartoons for the Post-Dispatch and won two Pulitzer Prizes. He was followed for four years by Bill Mauldin, famous from the Willie and Joe cartoons during WWII for Stars and Stripes when he won his first Pulitzer. He won his second at the Post-Dispatch in 1959 and was on the cover of Time Magazine while toiling away at 900 N. 12th Street.



Mauldin was followed Tom Engelhardt, who signed his cartoons simply “Engelhardt” for 35-years. John Sherffius replace Englehardt for 15 years before making way for the last editorial cartoonist at the Post, Matson.

Besides these guys there was Amadee Wohlschlaeger who was an illustrator and cartoonist at the Post for a half century he drew famous sports figures and even the Weather Bird.

I grew up reading both papers in town. Don Hesse at the Globe Democrat was the Conservative cartoonist in town for 38-years from 1946 until Newhouse stop publication in 1984.

Even over in Kansas City they still have a first rate cartoonist in Lee Judge at the Star. That cannot be said about St. Louis anymore.

ANOTHER CASUALTY: Newspapers used to be for everyone. They all included sections for different people. The sports section now gets the most number of hits online. But in days gone by there was the feature section with the twins Dear Abby and Ann Landers, bridge tips, gossip, TV listings and a TV and Radio columnist.

The same day R.J. Matson was let go, so was the PD's Food editor Judith Evens. The gossip columnist everyone remembers is Jerry Berger and his Let's Go Bergering columns. He was replaced by Deb Peterson who at the time lived on a quiet cul-de-sac in Kirkwood. She wasn't really up to the task of carrying on the local gossip. Plus the paper cut the space that had been Berger's. A week before the layoffs, Peterson was permanently assigned as an editorial writer, leaving the Post with no gossip gathering scribe.

Now food articles and daily cartoons on the editorial page are from other newspapers.

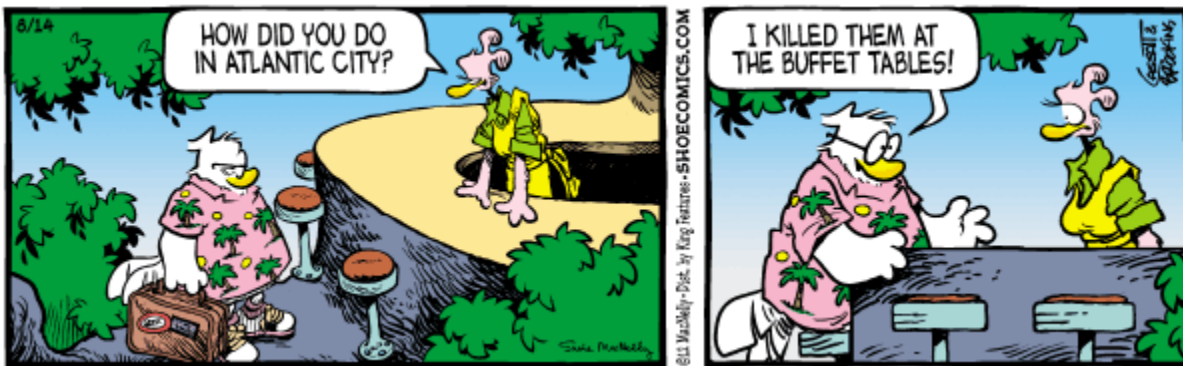
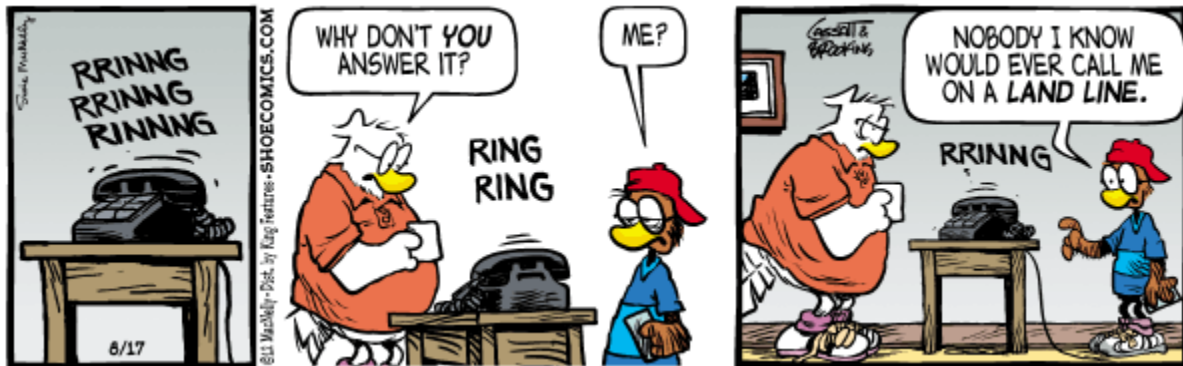
Space for Gail Pennington's TV column was eliminated. They next cut the space for TV listings. In an amazingly stupid move several years ago the PD stopped placing a weekly TV Magazine in copies of the Sunday paper sold on newsstands. Only home subscribers got the TV listings. What a bonehead move. For decades a number of people only bought the Sunday paper and one of the reasons for doing so is that they got the weekly TV listings. What did the Post-Dispatch do...they took that incentive to buy the paper away.

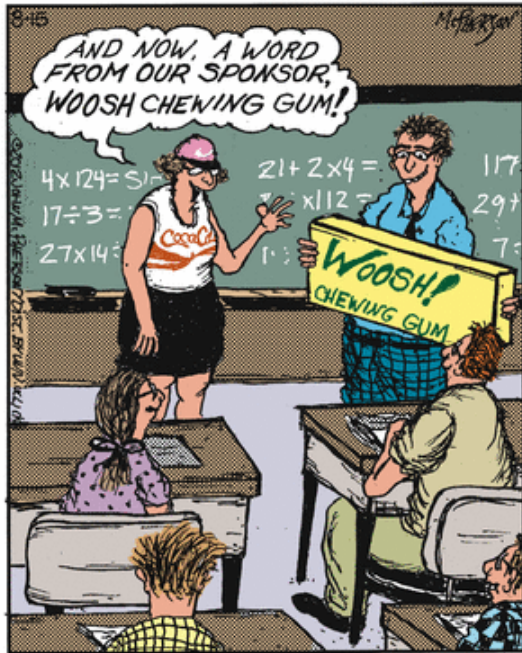
Now they are taking away the TV listings from the Sunday paper the subscribers get. Starting on September 9 you have to buy a separate subscription to TV Weekly Magazine which will be placed in your Sunday home delivered paper.

I think this move is likely to be as successful as the Journal newspapers. Somehow the folks at 122 W. Lockwood have been successful running the Webster-Kirkwood Times neighborhood papers covering the Webster and Kirkwood school district areas for 30 years, but Lee Enterprises after buying the Journal papers could only drive them into the ground. There was little or no news or advertising in the Journal papers. Delivery was spotty. Some weeks you got a paper and some weeks you didn't. Then it went to being a subscriber only paper with no news or ads. Whose buying and how phony are the Journal circulation numbers?

While the same week they announced cuts at the Post-Dispatch, Lee Enterprises CEO Mary Junck was awarded a bonus of stock options worth over \$500,000.

CARTOONS





Facing a severe budget crisis, Brockford School District found other ways to bring in revenue.



"The defendant, owner of Chompo Hot Dog Buns, INTENTIONALLY sells buns in bags of 8, despite the fact that hot dogs are sold in packages of 10!"

