

EX ALDERMAN NEWSLETTER 63

October 08, 2012

By John Hoffmann

MEET MR. RICH... Alderman Skip Mänge used to be a mayor, county councilman, an engineer and a high school teacher. He still is an alderman, plus Christian Scientist and is also apparently a leprechaun, because he thinks he found a pot of gold.



SKIP WANTS MORE PROPERTY WHILE THE CITY CAN'T MAINTAIN WHAT IT HAS

NOW: At the October 1 Conservation and Historical Preservation Commission Mänge talked about the progress he has made on his three goals:



- 1) Have the city buy the Frank Lloyd Wright house located behind Mason Ridge Elementary School.
- 2) Remove a log cabin from a house to be torn down on Conway Road, move the disassembled log cabin to Drace Park and rebuild it.
- 3) Obtain an 18 acre piece of property with a William Bernoudy contemporary house on Conway Road for a park.

When we first wrote about this we guessed the total estimated price would be around \$10m. We have lowered the estimated price to around \$5m.

Here is a link to our newsletter reporting when Mange first announced his plan as Commission Chairman.

http://www.johnhoffmann.net/ex_newsletter_60.pdf

Skip announced he is meeting with Mrs. Pappas on October 19 about her home behind Mason Ridge Elementary School. Mrs. Pappas' husband Theodore died in the last few years. She is still living in the house and it is not for sale. But Skip wants it.

Next he reported that the house with the log cabin inside on Conway Road was sold and the new owner plans to tear it down. Skip added the new owner would allow the city to remove the log cabin at the city expense between now and February. Skip wants to move it to Drace Park and put it with the reconstructed log cabin and two-story log house.

Finally he reported that the price on the property at 13428 Conway Road has dropped in price to \$3.8. He said it is in a family trust and some of the children were unaware that half the property is in a flood plan meaning it would be worthless to developers.

"There is some talk about it being a park," said Mange, who is doing almost all the talking. "I'd like to see that house not torn down. Atmosphere in our government is we are not going to buy it," said Mange who wants to find private funds to obtain it.

"It would be nice to have Hunter farms as a park," piped up new Commission member and former aldermen Jim Havens.

"That is a little out of our reach," added Mange, who apparently realizes he can't have all the land.

Before this meeting I was walking the dogs at Drace Park. A check of the Log Cabin house showed the city continues to refuse to conduct basic maintenance on the building. The bottom section to the basement door was missing allowing rain water and rodents to enter the house. A pane of glass was missing from the front storm door. The windows and window frames are long overdue for a painting.

Earlier this year the gutter drain was disconnected at the house causing all water from the gutter to go directly along the foundation.

What business does Mange have placing another structure at Drace Park if the city refuses to maintain the ones already there?



The bottom of the door is missing allowing water and rodents to enter the building.



All the windows and window frames are long overdue for paint.

PARKING LOT OF DEATH? While the city moves ahead with the plan for expand the parking lot what has it failed to do? Perhaps you have noticed when you attended a nighttime event such as an annual neighborhood meeting at Longview and noticed how dark the parking lot is.

While Mayor/Cigarette Lobbyist/Land Snatcher Jon Dalton claims that public safety is the number one priority the city has refused to fix the dark parking lot lights. Apparently shortly after the opening of the 2009 \$1.5 million Longview Farmhouse expansion the control to the new lights was destroyed and for several years only some of the lights work.

For some reason this does not seem to be a safety issue to the city staff. I was told that Parks Director Anne Nixon is not going to fix the lights until the new parking lot expansion is done. But it has not been a problem for scheduling the Longview Farmhouse for city and private events at times of darkness in the upcoming winter months.

At a recent parking lot update, the work on the west side of the lot was eliminated. That is where the non working lights are. The expansion work is going to be done on the east side of the tennis courts.

This begs two questions: 1) Why should the city spend more money on expanding the parking if it won't maintain it now? 2) Why does the city want to increase its liability by not lighting what it currently claims is a dangerous parking lot that needs to be expanded?

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING...THE SPIN WAS ON... 2013 IS ANOTHER DEFICIT YEAR BUT NOBODY WANTS TO SAY IT: I attended the finance committee meeting where the 2013 budget was approved and passed on to the Board of Aldermen. Technically the budget is the work of the mayor, but this one belonged solely to Betty Cotner, the city's fiancé director.

Mayor/Cigarette Lobbyist/Stealer of Widow's Property Jon "Snidely Whiplash" Dalton did not attend. Myself and Aldermen Chuck Lenz were the only people not city staffers or committee members who attended. Dalton will however claim he delivered another budget "in the black" when he campaigns for reelection.

SPINNING LIKE THE RINSE CYCLE: Sharon Rothmel, planning director, started things off by saying how she just issued a huge building permit. Then she said it was for Missouri Baptist Hospital, a non revenue producing facility.

She followed that with news that the kid museum that charges an admission just opened in the former location of the Midwest Flooring storefront. Again another non-revenue producer that does not sell anything! Finally she had the big news that a math tutor just rented a small office space for after school classes. It was a trifecta for the city. Three places that will not produce any sales tax revenue.

ROTHMEL SEE GOOD IN ALL BUSINESS SET BACKS Rothmel also reported the Three Dog Bakery has moved out of the lake front stores at Town and Country Crossing which has opened up the lake front corner for a larger business, as there are now several empty store fronts.

The Three Dog Bakery is downsizing due to a lack of business and moved into the vacant corner spaces near Whole Foods where the Pro-Max gym was located.

NEXT THE VERY RED 2013 BUDGET: Betty Cotner then spent over an hour presenting her 2013 budget. She claimed there was a surplus in the general fund of a whole \$28,380. This way mayor Dalton in an election year can tell residents how he had another balanced budget. However the General Fund portion of the budget did not include employee raises. If employees are awarded any kind of salary bump the budget will fall from **black** to **red**.

When asked about the missing salary increases, (which even during the year when we laid off five employees was still 1-percent) City Administrator John Copeland smugly said that would be announced at a later date.

While claiming the general fund budget had a \$28,380 surplus Cotner did not openly talk about the total deficit when you add all the city budget funds together and include Roads, Capital Improvements and Parks and Storm Water. The actual total city deficit **for the 2013 is \$2.4 million in the red before counting the unknown salary increases.**

Here are some highlights:

NO DEER MANAGEMENT IN 2013 BUDGET: This year the deer management work done in December 2012 and January 2013 is covered in the 2012 budget. For 2013 there is no money for deer management.



Seven deer off Mason Road at dusk will be safe from deer management activities in December of 2013 and January of 2014.

Capt. Gary Hoelzer said there is a chance with a successful sharpshooting season beginning in two months the city could go to “every other year” sharpshooting of deer. This is quite a contrast from his earlier statements that deer management needed to be done on an annual basis.

The promise of continued deer management on an annual basis made at the end of 2011 was apparently an empty one. Eliminating \$50,000 from the 2013 budget for deer control helps keep the sham budget showing a surplus.



Left to right finance commission chair Phil Behnen, Betty Cotner, Oz Conrad who expressed deep concerned with a proposed budget presented without employee pay raises included and Sharon “Glass half full” Rothmel.

SPEEDING TICKET REVENUE INCREASES: The cops and the city prosecutor are getting better at wringing cash out of motorists on the interstate highways. The 2013 budget projects that 15% of the revenue to operate the city in 2013 will come from municipal court fines. The last time we analyzed city accident and ticket rates we found that 54-percent of the accidents in town happened on I-64, I-270 and Highway 141, while the police were issuing 86-percent of all traffic tickets on those same streets ignoring enforcement on the streets next to our subdivisions.

We were inching toward the 15% mark back in 2010 but then the police department laid off three officers. The “revenue cutters” officially called the “traffic division” has since been very active and the booty...err fines... have increased.

PARKS FUNDING DROPS: Here is some very bad news for Alderman Skip Mange... there isn't any money in the budget to buy more park land or even dismantle and move a log cabin to Drace Park.

In 2013 the city plans to spend \$195,000 on the Longview House to replace windows, siding and doors. The double-wide conference center and Longview House is an “Official Money Pit.” All this should have been done when the conference center was built on the rear of the Longview Farmhouse, but Mayor Dalton wanted to keep the price tag down. By using some slick accounting he claimed the addition cost just over \$1 million. In reality it was almost \$1.5 million. Additional work such as the roof, more parking, and the siding, windows and doors should have been done at the same time in 2008 all added up to about \$2 million.

To purchase all three parks through bonds the city used millions of dollars transferred from the Capital Improvements fund. In 2013 the city will transfer \$1,000,000 from the Parks Fund back to the Capital Improvement Fund. That will leave an outstanding balance of \$6,490,000.

Betty Cotner is quick to point out that there is no official loan or debt and the city does not have to pay back the Capital Improvement Fund. However, many of us think in reality and in all fairness the money needs to be paid back. This will not help Skip Mange's desire to buy more parks, save houses and move log cabins. In reality the Parks fund still owes the Capital Improvement fund \$6.5million.

Currently not in the budget is money for the parking lot expansion (90% will be from grants) or for a dog park. The parking expansion is sure to be added on and will make the **deficit REDDER**.

From 2013 to 2014 the Parks and Storm Water budget should drop about 67%.

OVERALL DROP IN END OF THE YEAR SURPLUS: While Town and Country still has a very good surplus that is close to an additional year's worth of money. It will drop \$2.4 million in 2013 or 13%.

ROAD IMPROVEMENTS: Over \$2 million is budgeted for improvements of city streets. The city wants to get aggressive with street maintenance. Originally the city wanted to spend \$2 million in 2013 and \$2 million in 2014. However revenue sources won't allow that much and Cotner reported that road work in 2014 will have to be held to about \$1 million.

While this year's road work is a big reason for the \$2.4m deficit, if there was no road work other than that covered by County and State grants, we would still have an overall budget deficit.

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES:

General fund Revenue estimated for 2013:

Gross receipts	29%
Sales taxes	27%
Business Licenses	16%
Court fines	15%
Other Taxes	4%
Zoning Charges	3%
Services charged	3%
Misc revenue	3%

ALL EXPENDITURES:

Police	41%
Fire and Ambulance	39%
General Gov't	12%
Public Works	5%
Municipal Court	3%

THE FINAL VOTE: The evening ended with at least one and apparently a couple members of the committee not wanting to pass the budget proposal without employee raises included. Chairman/Alderman Phil Behnen asked for those in favor to say aye.

Some people said aye, however not all. Then Phil asked for a motion to adjourn. He never asked for the “nay” votes on the budget..

LYING WEBSITE Mayor Dalton apparently wants people to think he brought back branch chipping so badly that the city website has a link to the Fall Branch Chipping Program. The only problem is there isn't any fall branch chipping program. The city is subsidizing trash haulers yard waste pickup (leaves) for the month of November, but there is no return to the program of the city chipping up branches and limbs collected by homeowners since the summer.

NEW ON THE WEBSITE: The Photo Gallery is new on the city's website. A click on the link reveals 21 photos of Mayor/Cigarette Lobbyist/Widow Property Snatcher Jon Dalton included in the website. Many of the snaps are almost duplicated of Dalton at the same event. The worst is a posed shot of him and his wife and dog at Longview Park. However it was nice to see that Dalton only had one photo in the city's newsletter. The next city newsletter is just before the April election. It would be really nice if Dalton runs again in April for him not to write his usual 3-to-5 page commentary in the front of the newsletter. It is the only fair thing to do to hold Dalton to the same amount of space as his opponent, 300-words. When I ran against him in 2009 he used the first five pages of the newsletter as a campaign tool.

24-YEAR-OLD CHESTERFIELD MAN ARRESTED FOR TOWN AND COUNTRY

BURGLARIES: Jeffrey Schwartz , 24, of the 1274 Stillhouse Creek in Chesterfield has been arrested by the Town and Country Police in connection with several residential burglaries. Schwartz was charged with receiving stolen property after stolen property from two burglaries that was pawned was traced to Schwartz.

The burglaries occurred in September of 2011 on Timor Court near Clayton and Topping Roads and on June 27 in the 100 Block of Bon Chateau near Ladue and Babler Roads.

Schwartz has also been charged with Burglary and Stealing by the Creve Coeur Police and the Frontenac Police.

In 2011 Schwartz had a judgment against him for \$1,419 by Capital One Bank.

WANTED

BY THE TOWN AND COUNTRY POLICE DEPARTMENT
JEFFREY SCOTT SCHWARTZ
 FOR BURGLARY 2nd DEGREE



ARRESTED

JEFFREY SCOTT SCHWARTZ
 W/M, Age: 24
 Hgt: 5'09 Wgt: 150

Schwartz is suspected in the burglary of a home in the 100 block of Bon Chateau Drive on June 27, 2012 where over \$14,000 in jewelry, an iPad, a Dell laptop, a MacBook Pro laptop and an iPhone were taken. Entry was made via a rear sliding door that was pried open.

On August 10, 2012, Schwartz pawned two laptops and iPad at Southside Jewelry and Loan. The serial numbers on the pawned MacBook Pro laptop and iPad matched the ones stolen from the residence.

Schwartz was the primary suspect in the September, 2011 burglary of a home in the 1200 block of Timmor Court in Town and Country. Schwartz was later arrested by this department in January, 2012. The case was reviewed by the St. Louis County Grand Jury where a True Bill was issued for Receiving Stolen Property after it was found that Schwartz sold over \$13,300 of the victim's jewelry at Missouri Gold Buyers.

Schwartz may be occupying a light blue 2009 Ford Focus MSL FE1S5H exp. 2013.

The vehicle is registered to his girlfriend Ashley Nicole Buehler.

Anyone seeing Schwartz should call 911 immediately.




EXEMPLAR PHOTO
 2009 Ford Focus
 MSL FE1-S5H exp. 2013

AKIN'S BIG MISTAKES: Prior to the August Primary Missouri Republicans seemed to have had a reasonable chance to take back a senate seat from Claire McCaskill. Then Todd Akin won the primary.

Todd had a chance to win but quickly went from an even-bet to a long shot.



The strategy for a guy who has been famous for saying crazy things which seem so far off the charts to the far right and beyond was simple...shut up and show pictures of Senator Claire McCaskill hugging President Obama.

Just when Akin seemed to be recovering from his “legitimate rape” quote, he claims McCaskill, a sitting US Senator and a former Prosecuting Attorney who had a pretty good record of trying murders, rapists and arsonists as not being “ladylike” in their debate.

Then when asked at a campaign stop why he voted against a bill to give equal pay to women, he replied that he was against government telling the private sector what to do. It is fine to think that way...but don't say it at least until you get elected to a six-year term. To say that now is just ticking off more women who have been facing work place discrimination and double pane glass ceilings forever.

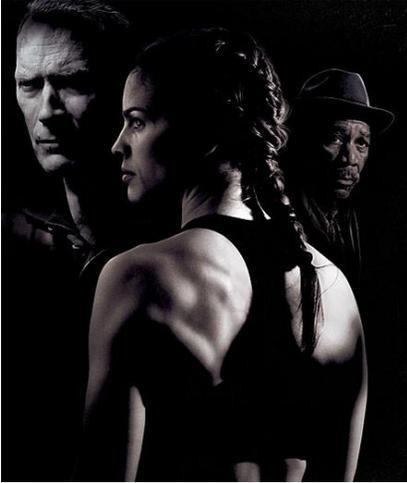
At some point Todd is even going to alienate conservative women to the point where they vote for McCaskill or for Jonathan Dine, the personal trainer who is running on the Libertarian ticket.

Akin cannot win the vote of St. Louis County, let along Jackson County and the Columbia area. Sure he can win West St. Louis County, but not North or South County.. He needs every vote he can get from out state Missouriians. Pissing off 51% of that electorate (women) probably was not a good idea. Of course I don't think Akin had any idea that was exactly what he has been doing.

Akin's first mistake was not to shut up. His second mistake was to hire his son Perry as his campaign manager. Akin needs someone who is tough and will remind him hourly if necessary to SHUT UP. Your son is simply not up for that job.

In fact Akin might have been wise to hire a tough as nails woman who can do two things. Keep her mouth shut and keep telling him to keep his mouth shut. People like Phyllis Schlafly or Jane Cunningham would be awful for the job. While they might be able to keep Todd off local TV and radio interview shows they would be equally as likely to say something peculiar.

He needed to hire someone like Maggie Fitzgerald, the character played by Hillary Swank in the movie Million Dollar Baby. A person who didn't talk much and could hit him with a quick right jab every time he tried to open his mouth.



Hillary Swank with Clint Eastwood and Morgan Freeman in the background.

TAXPAYERS BIG MISTAKES: Conservatives who complain that the Post-Dispatch is too liberal and the old timers from the days of the Globe-Democrat and Post-Dispatch who still refer to the Post as the St. Louis Daily Pravda should take heart in the series by reporter Stephen Deere on the History Museum wasting money with its \$1,000,000 deal to purchase an empty lot from former St. Louis mayor, Freeman Bosley.

Of course the empty lot did not really cost \$1,000,000. It was actually \$875,000 they paid to Bosley for a portion of the land six years after he bought the property for \$150,000. But they also paid \$100,000 in legal fees! Perhaps it isn't such a good deal if you have to pay \$100,000 in legal fees and the lawyers never suggest that you get a fair market appraisal of the property.

Then it turns out the Director of the History Museum, Robert Archibald is pulling down an annual salary of \$515,000. He is making more than the President of the United States!

Next the Post-Dispatch revealed that Archibald had promised Joe Edwards' Loop Trolley a \$1,000,000 contribution from the History Museum. It turns out Archibald is also on the Board of Directors of the Loop Trolley. After the revelations of the clear conflict of interest the offer was withdrawn.

The lesson learned here is that St. Louis Countians are basically good hearted people. They voted to take on an additional property tax for the Zoo, Art Museum and Science Museum. Then they added the Shaw's Gardens in 1983 and the History Museum in 1988. Most people have a soft fuzzy spot in their hearts and apparently their heads, by adding more and more to the original tax district. .

The Mistakes: By funneling property tax money to so many groups you lose view of the control and use of the money. The Science Museum had up to eight assistant directors and managers all pulling down six figure salaries, plus receiving annual performance bonuses. The Post-Dispatch revealed this boondoggle in the spring of 2011. The director of the Science Center was also making more than the President of the United States. A good rule of thumb might be if you get tax money your head person can't make more than the President of the United States, who is currently is getting by on \$400,000 annually.

At some point we taxpayers have to wise up and turn off the spigot.

We added the History Museum to the tax rolls because we all remember field trips there as kids. It was a fun day away from school. Let's let them join the zoo in taxing our property.

Now \$10,000,000 of the History Museum's \$15,000,000 budget comes from property taxes! How have we taxpayers been rewarded? We have had the History Museum hand out huge salaries to its director and top staff members, buy real estate without a use plan in place for three times its actual value and have the director with a clear conflict of interest promise \$1,000,000 to build the Loop Trolley.

Say No to the Next Tax Grabs: Coming up on the November ballot are a new local sales taxes that would give money to the keep up the Gateway Arch grounds and tear down the County Library headquarters that was just remodeled. It is time to say NO! The Arch grounds is not a locally run park, but it is part of the US Park system. I think what we have seen with the money wasting at the Science Center followed by the History Museum it is time to wise up. The County library headquarters on Lindbergh does not need to be replaced. Updates at branch libraries should be handled with existing maintenance funds and not a higher tax.

CHARLIE BRENNAN DEFENDS HISTORY MUSEUM: I don't know if you watched the September 27 Donnybrook show on KETC. KMOX's Charlie Brennan in the round table discussion where Brennan as the moderator can't keep his mouth shut, defended Archibald and pointed out that the money used to buy the empty lot without a appraisal came from the \$5,000,000 of the annual \$15,000,000 that was not from the taxpayers.

That is some kind of amazing logical. If they didn't waste a \$1,000,000 to buy property they have no plan to use, they would need less tax money to run the institution.

BRENNAN RATINGS DOWN CALLING FOR AN ADJUSTMENT: It was interesting to see where Brennan's two hour mid-morning radio show needed help. It was announced that Debbie Monterey would join Brennan for the first hour of the 9-to-11 show. Apparently the McGraw Milhaven show on KTRS and Glen Beck on KFTK are drawing listeners away from the name dropping Brennan. For sometime Milhaven has accused Brennan and KMOX of keeping him off of Donnybrook as a substitute panelist.
http://blogs.riverfronttimes.com/dailyrft/2011/04/ktrs_mcgraw_milhaven_kmox_charlie_brennan_cat_fight.php

OUR PREDICTION ABOUT CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS IS NOW HALF TRUE: Back in June one of the last columns I wrote for Patch.com dealt with Charter Communications announcing that their top executives, who they just hired away from a New York City area cable company, were going to relocate themselves to New York City.

<http://chesterfield.patch.com/articles/cable-tv-execs-are-sending-a-clear-message-to-customers>

I listed the quality of life issues between Manhattan and Town and Country. I closed the piece predicting that Charter would eventually be sold off and the T&C headquarter offices would be shut down. Four months later and it appears that I'm half right so far as Charter announced on Tuesday October 2 they planned to move the company's headquarters and 200 jobs to Connecticut. Have you looked at the cost of living in the suburban New York City areas of Connecticut compared to St. Louis? It is not a pretty picture if you are moving to the east.

CRIME IRONY: It had been rumored for several months that St. Louis Police Chief Dan Isom would be forced out of the top cop spot. When Isom announced on October 1 he was taking a job with UMSL as a faculty member or criminologist it was somewhat ironic.

Isom bragged how he helped lower the now violent crime rate in St. Louis as Police Chief. Unfortunately homicides flourished.



However it appeared that Isom learned well while he was a member of the Police Department's command staff. Back in 2004 and 2005 the St. Louis Police stopped reporting much of the rapes in the city and then bragged how there was a reduction in rapes.

In fact police officers were instructed to write up the rapes as minor assaults or to simply write up a memo and forward it to the overworked sex crimes unit. Either way actual rapes were kept off the books until Post-Dispatch reporter Jeremy Kohler uncovered the scam in 2005.

Isom pulled a variation on the hidden rape scheme by trying to use smoke and mirrors and drop the numbers of property crimes. If someone broke into 15 parked cars near the Arch according to FBI crime reporting standards the police should count each incident as a separate crime. However, Isom instructed officers to write up incidents of people breaking into multiple cars whether overnight in a neighborhood or on a parking lot around downtown as a single crime. Guess what? The property crime rate plummeted, while in reality actual crimes were increasing.

I can only hope that Isom works this method in lowering crime in his classroom lectures at UMSL. "If you Stop Reporting Crimes...The Crime Rate Drops 101."

DEER ACCIDENT RATE ALMOST BACK TO 2011 LEVELS: In September of 2011 we had three car-deer accidents. In 2012 for September the number was FIVE. Year-to-date for 2012 there have been 48 accidents. In 2011 there were 50.

The accidents in September were on Clayton Road at Country Life Acres (Ward 1), Des Peres Road and Hickory Road (Ward 1), I-270 north of Manchester (Ward 1), Clayton Road west of Principia (Ward 2) and South Mason near south city limits (Ward 2) Please note that three of the accidents were in Ward 1 where there is suppose to have the fewest deer. **Late October begins the four-month Deer on Car Grill season.**

BOARD OF ALDERMEN DOES A 180...APPROVES SECOND VINSON MORTGAGE SIGN. APPARENTLY THE KEY WAS VINSON DIDN'T SHOW UP. If you have been following the saga of TV pitchman and King of the mortgage for moderately price houses, Ray Vinson, you will know for a year now Vinson has had votes for the size of signs and a second sign on his office building go against him.

The building which had been empty for 18 months is being leased by Vinson and sits along Des Peres Road (the I-270 outer road) near the southern city limits. The first sign on the building was not the size Vinson wanted. It was his first loss.

His bid for a second sign went down to a defeat, but he came back with a new proposal for a sign on the north side of the building that was smaller. That also was voted down at the last meeting, but two aldermen were absent.

The building was around no houses and few knew it was actually in Town and Country. It began to appear as if the Republican aldermen were voting against being pro business due to Vinson's TV image of his tight suit and punk haircut. In St. Louis terms...they thought he was a Hoosier. After all he doesn't belong at Old Warson or Bellerive. You are more likely to find Ray at Fast Eddies.

Monday Alderwomen Gussie Crawford asked for the sign resolution to be reconsidered. The building owner, Dan Johnson was present without Mr. Vinson and made the point the building was empty without Vinson, who is renting 60-percent of the space.

WHO IS THE HOOSIER NOW? The voice vote was 6-2 with Tim Welby and Phil Behnen still voting no. Keep in mind that Welby who has been fined for Ethics violations actually had t-shirts made up for his kids when he was first elected that were printed with "My Dad is an Alderman" on the front of the t-shirt.

In other words Welby is a bigger Hoosier (St. Louis definition not Indiana definition) than Vinson.

LONGVIEW PARKING LOT EXPANSION MOVES FORWARD: The Board of Aldermen continued to ignore the wishes of the people and voted to apply for the \$100,000 worth of grant money from the St. Louis County Municipal Parks grants Commission to increase the size of the Longview Park parking lot.

Total cost now for the project is around \$120,000 to add 15 parking spaces that according to public hearings and petition drives had overwhelming opposition in the community.



Alderman Chuck Lenz asked during the agenda meeting if the \$8,476 in the parking lot expansion for a water line was necessary. Skip Mange admitted it was not.

WEST COUNTY JAZZ BIG BAND CONCERT The Route 66 Jazz Orchestra will be performing some great Big Band music in the West County area soon. On Wednesday October 17 the 20 piece big band will perform at the Sky Music Lounge at the Barn of Lucerne, Clayton and Kehrs Mill Roads starting at 8pm.

If you can't make that concert a week later they will be performing at the First Unity Church on Butler Road between I-55 and Tesson Ferry Road. Admission for either concert is \$10.

The group is the former Meramec Lab Jazz Band and is made up of current and former professional musicians who get together on Wednesdays to play big band jazz charts. .



Vocalist Valerie Tichacek with the Route 66 Jazz Orchestra, a 20-piece big band.

GADFLY PALMER WANTS TO BRING BACK CITY MONEY TO SYMPHONY: At the end of the October Conservation and Preservation Commission meeting, member Mariette Palmer stated how the Town and Country Symphony is having financial problems and needs the city to resume giving it money.

She blabbed on how wonderful the Symphony is and how it is free. Meanwhile several of us in the room were biting our tongues and did not shout out how awful they sound.

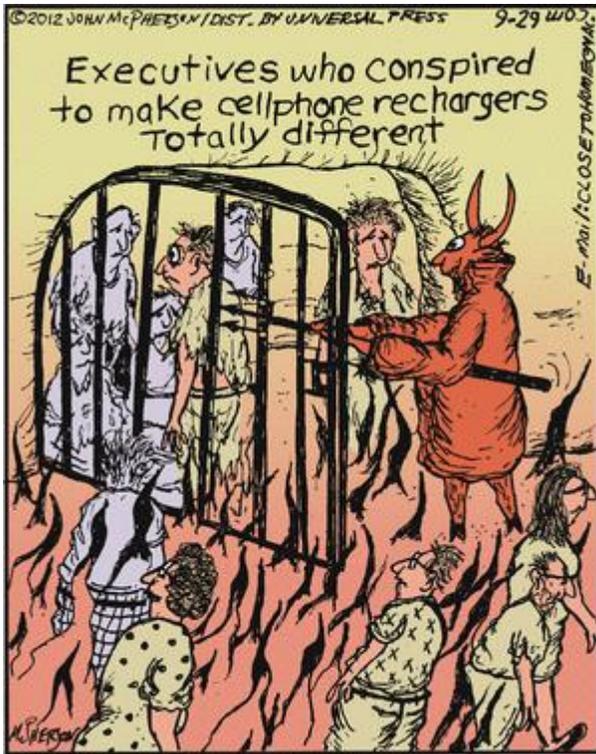
I did blurt out that money would be best used to restore a full branch chipping program before the city would start handing thousands of dollars to amateur musicians who aren't very good.

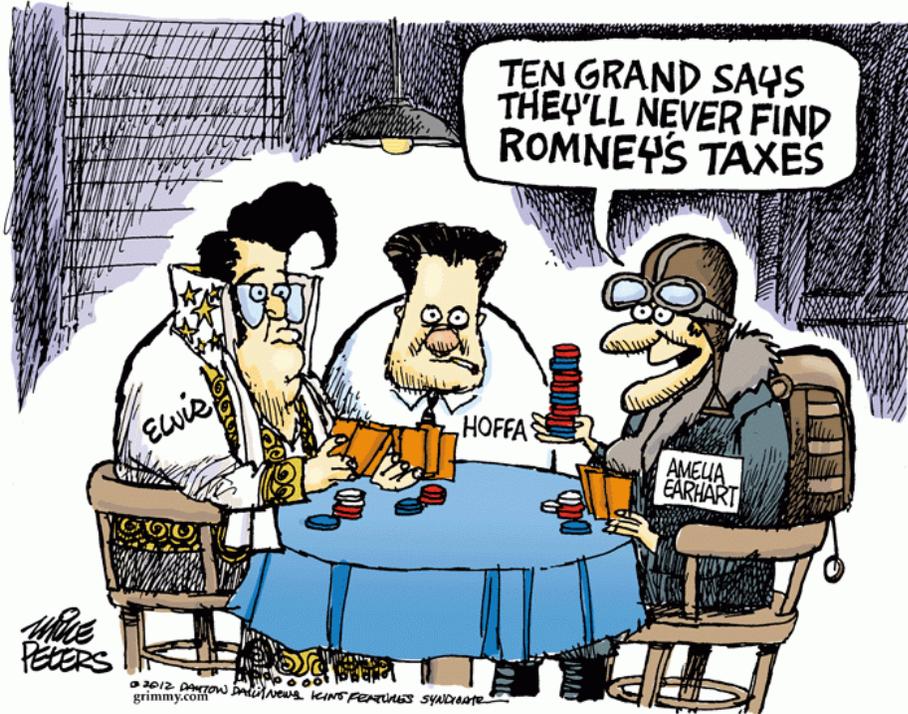
Skip Mange said the Symphony should have a member make a request of the city. Alderman Chuck Lenz said the finance committee is just finishing putting together a tight budget for 2013 and it does not include any extra money.

The city used to give the group as much as \$20,000 a year. It now gives the Symphony free rent at the Longview Farmhouse for its office. I have been saying for five years...this (a symphony) is not a traditional function of a suburban municipal government...especially during a recession.

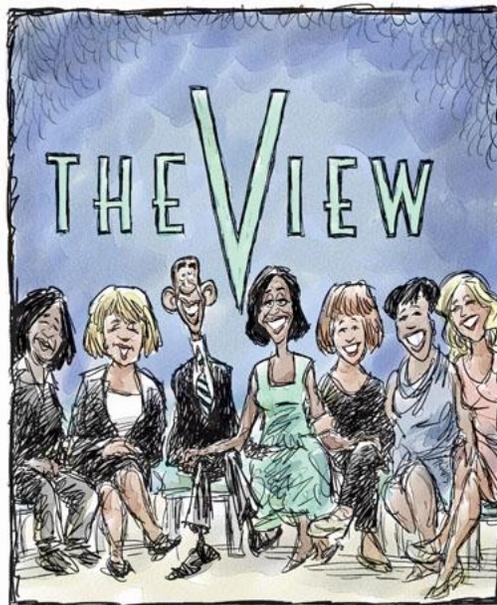
CARTOONS:





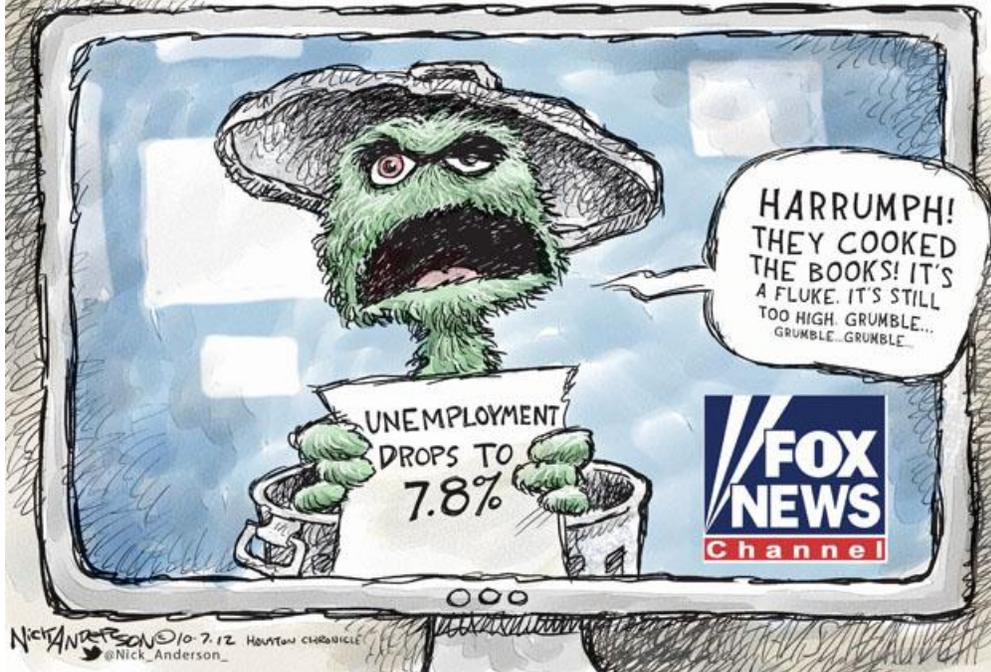


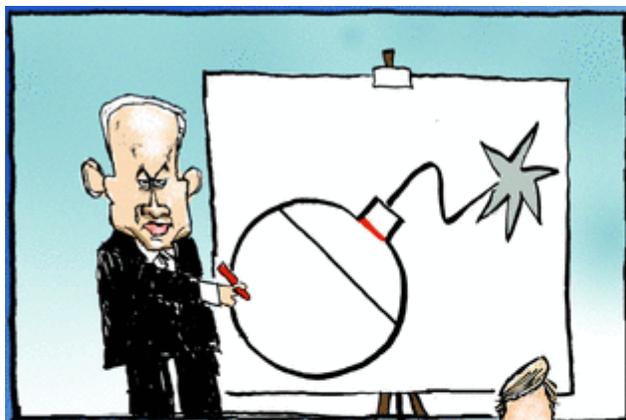
The UN General Assembly affords me the opportunity to address a critical global constituency...





Oscar the Grouch lands a new gig quickly...





NO
VIOLENCE
YET, AS
OFFENDED
CARTOON
CHARACTERS
WORLDWIDE
REMAINED
CALM DESPITE
A PROVOCATIVE
DRAWING
MOCKING
CARTOON
BOMBS.



BOKBLUSTER.COM
CREATORS.COM ©12