

EX ALDERMAN NEWSLETTER 73

January 03, 2013

By John Hoffmann

IT DOESN'T COST ANYTHING TO FILE: There is absolutely no fee in filing to run for mayor of Town and Country. Someone has to file so clear headed residents have someone to vote for instead of Jon "Snidely Whiplash" Dalton. Here are the reasons we need someone else to be able to vote for:

- 1) Dalton was sued three times by area merchants for not paying his bills.
- 2) In 2005 Dalton was a paid lobbyist for the West County EMS & Fire Protection District which was a contractor with the City of Town and Country. Dalton was mayor at the time. Later in 2005 Dalton signed a 5-year contract renewal with the fire district that was highly favorable for the fire district and unfavorable for the city. In fact six years later a new contract was signed for a lot less money which proved the overcharge in 2005.
- 3) Dalton is now and for over 10 years has been a lobbyist for tobacco companies. As mayor he takes an oath to look after the health, safety and welfare of the residents. As mayor he refused to sign with other West County mayors supporting the County wide smoking ban. Dalton cares about cash in his pocket, before the health of residents.
- 4) Dalton was the principal person behind using eminent domain to steal the property and business of Opal Henderson, who in 2008 was a 78-year-old widow. Dalton formed the Icehouse Redevelopment LLC and another LLC and joined with investors Disper-Schmidt, LLC and snatched Henderson's salvage yard using eminent domain. The law firm of Lewis-Rice instead of a city attorney represented the St. Louis Land Clearance Authority. Dalton is a partner at Lewis-Rice. Henderson was low-balled and was paid \$217,000. She sued to stop the land grab and lost but got the price increased to \$388,000 by a judge. She then sued and a jury ruled she had been cheated out of \$1,000,000. Dalton and fellow investors appealed. They lost but continued to refuse to pay the award. Finally the investors, including Mayor Jon Dalton were sued in Federal Court to pay up. They finally did after originally being ordered to by a St. Louis jury 2 ½ years earlier. Incidentally the Icehouse nightclub district was never built.



Opal Henderson with her attorney Chet Pleban after finally getting her judgment. .

- 5) The municipal judge and prosecutor appointed by Dalton routinely reduce DWI cases to illegal parking with \$500 fines so the defendant will not have a DWI record.
- 6) Dalton handed out three layoff notices to women employees the same month he Gave \$5,000 of city money to the Bellerive Country Club Grounds subdivision to Pay for improvements made to the subdivision entrance six months earlier.

Do you really want this guy to be your mayor?

I ran against him in 2009 filing at the last minute just to give residents someone else to vote for. 19% of voters took the offer and did not vote for Dalton. Certainly someone this time could just file as a community service even if they don't plan to spend any money.

RACES IN ALL FOUR WARDS NEED ANOTHER CANDIDATE: There will be no actual elections in T&C this spring if someone doesn't file against the incumbents. The filing deadline is January 15.

DIEHL CAN COLLECT MONEY BUT HAS HAD PROBLEMS PAYING IT: Unlike St. Louis County we continue to do the difficult task of checking to see if elected officials (our employees) have a good record of paying their taxes.

State Rep. John Diehl, who represents Town and Country and Chesterfield in the state house and is the House Majority Floor Leader has collected \$1,078,000 in campaign contributions since 2008 to run unopposed. He collected the money like a pro from gambling companies, cigarette manufacturers, railroads and other special interests from across the country. Paying his taxes was another matter. He was three months and four days late in paying his \$858 personal property tax bill in 2004, while he was a Town and Country alderman. He paid a penalty with interest of \$54 when he finally paid on April 4, 2005. In 2006 it was worse. Diehl was six months and 24 days late in paying his \$1,231 personal property tax bill. He got around to paying it on July 24, 2007 after paying a penalty and interest of \$200.52.

It is nice to see a guy in a position to raise our taxes have a record of not paying them.

Diehl was much better about paying his taxes on his house. He has never been late in paying real estate taxes on his home on the corner of Clayton Road and White Stable Lane.

CANDIDATES WITH TROUBLE PAYING TAXES ON TIME: Let's take a look at our local aldermen and see if any have problems with tax payments:

Fred Meyland-Smith: According to County Tax records Meyland-Smith was 11 months and one day late in paying his 2009 personal property taxes. In fairness the interest and penalties were so low (\$3.83) it appeared as if Fred may have only owed a small portion on the \$1,433.82 tax bill.

Jon Benigas: In the last eight years Benigas has been late paying his taxes four times. A .500 average is great in baseball, but not so good in the paying your taxes department. In 2011 Benigas was one month late in paying the \$241.50 personal property bill on his two Lexus automobiles. In 2010 Benigas was three days late in paying his personal property tax bill. In 2009 Benigas was 34 days late in paying his taxes. In 2005 Benigas was one month and 15 days late in paying his taxes.

Benigas has never been late paying his real estate taxes.

THE ONE-TWO PUNCH...DALTON AND DIEHL OR THE ZOMBIE AND MILLIONAIRE: If you don't have Charter Cable and if you were not watching a few shows on cable you missed the act of the buddies Jon Dalton and John Diehl going back to back doing Christmas messages.



Jon "Zombie" Dalton



John "Million Dollar" Diehl

Dalton went first and as the mayor of Town and Country read his message off a teleprompter. It was as if he was a Zombie. He clearly was not a human, which simply reinforced what I have been saying for years. After all he is a tobacco lobbyist and snatcher of a business and commercial property from a widow using eminent domain for an under financed nightclub district. I don't think Dalton blinked once during his message. It was like he had escaped from the Twilight Zone Marathon on the Sci-fi Channel.

Diehl went next. He was wearing an open collar shirt and seemed to be the opposite of Dalton. He was very relaxed, as if he had a couple of shots before the taping. He went on to remind people not to drink and drive during the holidays. It could have been a personal message for the Dalton clan, since Jonathan Dalton, Jr. was arrested for Drunk Driving last New Year's Eve and arrested for DWI again on June 23. (We are guessing he was either celebrating Clarence Thomas' birthday or had left a late night wake on the first anniversary of the death of Peter Falk.) I was waiting for him to stare in the camera and say, "Hey Jay Dalton, I talking to you bro."

ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST: The second tear down in a week in Ward-2. This one in the 13000 block of Thornhill and was last occupied by Grahame Rhodes, who was indicated by a Federal grand jury in June for conducting a multi-million dollar Ponzi scheme. The house was vacated shortly after the arrest and sold. Rhodes pled guilty to the charge in December.



THE 2012 DEER MANAGEMENT: The city got its monies worth from White Buffalo, the contractor it paid \$54,000 to use lethal methods to reduce deer in the city. All the deer killed were butchered and given to food pantries.

White Buffalo killed 115 deer in less than three weeks in the second half of December. Last year White Buffalo reported that the nearly 300 deer killed in six weeks had little effect on the deer overpopulation in the southern sections of Ward-2. This year they killed 68 deer in Ward 2, concentrating in areas near the Thornhill and Mason Valley subdivisions.

We will have the full deer report in our next newsletter.

HOLIDAY MOMENTS: The **Kids at Channel 5 went to the barn and put on a New Year's Day newscast.** It was just like watching a Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney movie to see where the kids at KSDK (where Gannett has stopped using people over 50 who might know something about St. Louis) decided by golly they could put on a newscast.



Mickey and Judy before putting on the big show...it was just like watching the kids at

Channel 5 put on a newscast over the holidays.

A CHRISTMAS MIRACLE: The night started with a heavy snow, but none of it was sticking to anything but the grass. Educator and musician Larry Johnson had a CD release party that featured a two-hour concert on the Friday before New Years at the Sheldon. I knew it was going to be an unusual evening when during the concert Jim Manley, one of St. Louis' top jazz trumpet players was featured doing the standard "That's All" with a string quartet backing him up.



After the concert we went to O'Connell's Pub on Kingshighway and Shaw for a late dinner. We arrived at 10:30 on a Friday night and there were exactly two customers in



the place on a Friday night...that was our Christmas Miracle for 2012. There were two waitresses for two tables. Our waitress shrugged..."people must be afraid of the snow," she said.

Goodbye 2012: Let's see...2012...I started the year with three jobs and ended it with one job that is only from mid-November to May. I broke my shoulder and will no longer be able to throw a baseball or shoot a free throw (honestly I had not been doing a lot of either prior to the injury) and had a heart procedure.

The highlight of the year might have been driving up to a roadside produce stand in the State of Washington and buying Honeycrisp apples for \$1.99 a pound that had just been picked that day.

RADIO DAYS: I used to work in radio so when someone asks me to be on their radio show, I normally accept. I used to be a regular guest on the Mike Murphy Show in Kansas City and had a weekly ten minute guest spot on a Baltimore sports talk station when I was a baseball writer. Jamie Allman from KFTK (97.1) asked me if I would appear on his show once a week and talk about West County politics, I accepted even though it meant setting my alarm clock.



97.1's morning man Jamie Allman

Of course if you are talking about West County politics you are talking about mostly Republicans. If you are a regular reader of these newsletters you know I both report news and make fun of some of the local politicians. I'm happy to make fun of Democrats and have done so at the expense of a number of West County Deer Lovers, Charlie Dooley and Claire McCaskill. But let's be realistic, Democrats are scarce out here. The majority of the players in Town and Country plus Chesterfield are from the GOP.

I was on with Marc Cox, who was filling in for Jamie at the end of the year and did a run down on my local state officials serving in Jefferson City starting with Senator Jane Cunningham. I then went to Rep. Sue Allen and finished with Rep. John Diehl, who has collected \$1.078-million in campaign contributions from out of state special interests to run unopposed three times.

Within minutes of being on the air I received an angry email from a listener of the radio show asking how dare I appear on a conservative radio station and make fun of Republicans. He said he would begin immediately getting me removed from the air.

I have received exactly three emails about appearing on the Allman in Morning program. Here they are:

From: ssramfan@aol.com [mailto:ssramfan@aol.com]
Sent: Thursday, December 27, 2012 8:04 AM
To: johnhoffmann@charter.net
Subject: Who are you?

Heard you on Allman show this morning, with Marc Cox. Why, I don't know. Are you his illegitimate father or something?

97.1FM is a Conservative Talk station. So he has you on to put down Conservatives. Very funny! NOT!!

I will be advising Jeff Allen to not allow you on the air wave of 97.1, again.

Steve Shull
Sent from my HTC EVO 4G LTE exclusively from Sprint

-----Original Message-----

From: Mitch Murphy [mailto:murphyclan748@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, December 12, 2012 8:07 AM
To: johnhoffmann@charter.net
Subject: Real news about time

Mr. Hoffmann:

I heard you this morning on the radio. I think honesty, the kind you and Jaimie report, are lacking in St. Louis and the rest of the country.

Thank you for your service.
Mitch Murphy

Sent: Sunday, November 04, 2012 8:41 PM
To: John Hoffmann
Subject: RE: ex alderman newsletter

I heard you Friday morning on 97.1 while I was driving to KC. You sound taller on the radio.

SPEAKING OF RADIO On Saturday December 29 it was revealed that 81-year-old Richard Miller, former president of the Truman Bank died apparently of natural causes. Prior to the banking business Miller owned two radio stations, KXLW AM 1320 and KADI FM 96.5 and later 96.3.

As a former employee of Miller's as a disc jockey I am amazed he managed to die of natural causes instead of being a murder statistic. His mistreatment of the office staff was legendary. But I have a couple of unique memories working at KADI.



When I was hired I didn't force anyone out. The midnight jock was leaving to go to a Top-40 station in Peoria. Miller apparently was a listener to my weekend morning radio shows that featured a lot of folk music and some rock plus a little jazz. I interviewed at his apartment on Lindell late on a Sunday morning. He and his blond live-in girlfriend were still in their bed clothes having coffee when I arrived. I have no idea what was discussed other than the money which was a lot to me, almost three times the minimum wage.

KADI had switched from a jazz format that featured legendary black St. Louis radio announcers, such as Spider Burks, Lou "Fatha" Thimes and Leo "The Man in the Red Vest" Cheers, to a bad sounding Top-40 format that lasted about a year. Richard J. Miller then decided to go after what was becoming the fastest rising music station in St. Louis, KSHE. (Back in those days you described St. Louis radio ratings as KMOX and then all the music stations.)

KADI took a short lived slogan of the "KADI Takes You Higher."

It was funny KADI and KXLW were in the same building. The studios were across from each other but were decades apart. KADI had the newest studio, with the newest equipment, plush chairs, deep soft red carpeting and indirect lighting. It was as if it was Miller's alter ego.

Meanwhile KXLW which was on the air during the daytime only had a crummy tile floor, equipment from the 1940s, harsh overhead lights and old furniture. The format at KXLW was Black Gospel. The one announcer I remember was "Brother Columbus Gregory." He was very gifted at selling himself as a friend and pitching sponsors' products and services.

The other big difference between KADI and KXLW was that KXLW was the station that made money. The people working in the studio with the old equipment and broken furniture were the ones keeping KADI jocks with relatively high pay and nice working conditions. It was grossly unfair.

Back in the 1971 all the TV stations signed off the air between midnight and 1:30am. Most of the radio stations also went off the air late at night. So being a midnight disc jockey means you got a lot more listeners than today. But still there were few advertisers after midnight. The stations aiming at younger people had to stay on the air overnight, but often the midnight jocks were as much a station security guard as a disc jockey.

So I was amazed when every night at 12:30am I played a commercial for Eastern Airlines with Orson Wells doing the voiceover saying, "Eastern Airlines...The Wings of Man." Even as an 18-year-old I could figure out this made no sense whatsoever. Our sponsors were head shops, clothing stores and rock concert promoters. I finally asked someone in sales about the commercial and they laughed.

"We recorded that ad off of KSD and you play it at 12:30 every night so we can put it on our list of advertisers when we go out and call on clients. It impresses them and Eastern Airlines has no idea they are advertising on the station."

Miller would do off the wall things like hire people he met on airplanes as disc jockeys, without thinking that he would have to fire someone.

Art Blair was the one clean cut straight arrow at the station. He was from Kansas, wore his hair short and came to work every day in an ironed button down shirt. He worked the 10am to 2pm shift. The first part of his shift there were absolutely no listeners. Kids were either still asleep, at school or listening to Jack Carney on KMOX like everyone else in St. Louis was doing. We all liked Art a lot because he was a regular guy.

Miller met someone on a flight and hired him flying over Ohio. When he got to St. Louis he informed the program director and the decision was made the new guy would take Art's spot. All the hippy disc jockeys were pissed. So was the admin staff. They briefly

gave Art a job of ripping the news off the AP wire machine and reading it for newscasts on both stations. He was the only white guy on KXLW. Art was smart and quickly found a job at a small station in the middle of Kansas and moved his family west.

He guy Miller hired turned out to be a Jehovah's Witness and refused to play about a third of the albums in the station's library for religious reasons.

The stations program director at the time was Ron Elz, who was best known as the first Johnny Rabbit at KXOX and later Pete Bunny at WIL. Ron's office was under the studio and if you were playing something he didn't like he would take a broom stick and start pounding on his ceiling which was also the studio's floor to let you know his displeasure.

We thought due to Ron's years in Top-40 radio he would try and restrict what we played by taking a grease pen and marking over about half the cuts on any new rock album. The evening jock started hiding a can of lighter fluid and a cloth in the drop ceiling so we could play tracks that Ron had forbidden. It turned out Zippo lighter fluid was great for removing grease pencil marks on vinyl record albums.

While others credit Miller with hiring Gary "Records" Brown, I always blamed him for driving several creative formats into the ground, especially when KADI was a jazz station and then giving up to soon on competing against KSHE.

He did the same thing with banks. Federal regulators closed Truman bank in September.

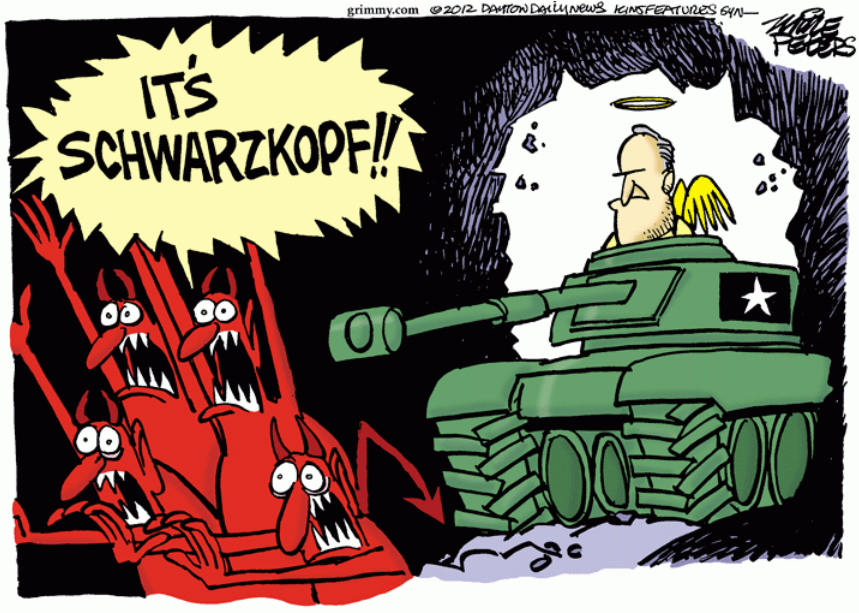
CARTOONS:





While driving on County Route 17 in Utah, Boyd and Carl encounter the Fiscal Cliff.

I have been wondering about this for some time. When Congress goes over the Fiscal Cliff do they drive into the Anacostia River in Southeast DC or the Potomac north of Georgetown?



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