

UNAPPROVED CHESTERFIELD NEWSLETTER 17

December 11, 2012

By John Hoffmann

MAYBE THEY WILL RETURN SOME OF THEIR SALARY: Councilpersons are paid \$500 monthly while the mayor is paid \$1,000 a month. Their duties include attending two Council meetings a month and a variety special commission or committee meetings where they are members. Looking at the December calendar you have to wonder if perhaps the Chesterfield elected officials should return half of their pay. Here are the meetings that have been cancelled:

- 12/06 Planning and Public Works (the committee's 2nd meeting in Nov was also cancelled the second meeting in December was not scheduled because there is no second council meeting)
- 12/06 Board of Adjustment
- 12/08 Parks and Rec Citizen's Advisory Committee
- 12/13 Architectural Review Board
- 12/17 Second monthly City Council meeting not scheduled

Only the Planning Commission meeting on December 10 was not cancelled. Instead of two City Council meetings there was only one on December 3. A number of other committee and commissions were not even scheduled to meet in December.

Things can be tough for well-to-do communities to hold meetings in July and August and again in December when too many members are at vacation cabins on lakes or the seaside in the summer and ski lodges in December.

Unfortunately my job that requires me to attend college basketball games conflicted with the December 3 City Council meeting which I missed. Luckily everything that happened at the December 3 Council meeting I had reported in earlier newsletters when the bills came up for a first reading or were discussed at the Budget Review meeting. .

PM B-B-Q MOVES: If you live out in the 63005 section of town you probably already know that PM B-B-Q has moved to the north end of the shopping center on Long Road at Edison where it first opened. If you like PM but have avoided it because it was always hard to find a table and sometimes the line to order went out the door...you are in luck. The B-B-Q joint isn't nearly as crammed. It now has 4,000 square feet. There is enough room where lines to order won't wind outside the door. Also there is no more waiting for someone to leave to claim a table. There are plenty of tables.



PM B-B-Q has moved across the shopping center and now sits at the corner of Long Road and Edison.



The sitting area at PM B-B-Q has tripled. No more having to eat in your car because of no tables being available.

THE RACE OF THE OUTLETS: On December 1, I went out and photographed the construction at the two outlet centers under construction in the Chesterfield Valley. It was no contest, the Taubman Prestige Outlet, which I refer to as the Hockey Rink Outlets is way ahead of the Premium Outlets (referred here as the River Outlets). The folks at the Hockey Rink Outlets have a August 2 opening date. The River Outlets

people recently announced a August 22 opening date. They had better hurry and get was unseasonably warm winter weather again this year if they plan to make that date.



The Hockey Rink Outlets had most of the front outer walls up on December 1.



The view of the River Outlets construction from Olive Street Road is not as impressive.

MACY'S TO HOLD 48-HOUR SALE...AS CITYOF CHESTERFIELD SCREWS NEWER MERCHANTS WITH SPECIAL ORDINANCE:

Macy's announced last Thursday that they plan to have all their area stores including the Chesterfield store open for 48-hours straight from 7am on Friday December 21 through 7am on Sunday December 23. This will violate the new Chesterfield ordinance which allows stores to be open overnight only on Thanksgiving night and Black Friday if Macy's was located in Chesterfield Valley. However, Chesterfield Mall is exempt from the new ordinance.

CHESTERFIELD HAS LITTLE SENSE OF FAIRNESS: Since Chesterfield Mall was built long before Chesterfield became a city it is grandfathered by the existing St. Louis County Ordinances at the time.

So the City Council passes an ordinance that would not allow department stores such as Target or WalMart in Chesterfield Valley or the new outlet stores to be open overnight except on Thanksgiving night...stores in Chesterfield Mall can do whatever they want. How is that fair?

This is the same as the city giving one outlet mall a Commercial Improvement District sales tax and not fighting the another new outlet mall that is getting a TDD (Transportation Development District) sales tax. While Chesterfield Mall has been supporting the city, school district and fire district for years, the Chesterfield City Council gave competing developers a huge tax break. How is that fair?



Here is an example of the unleveled playing field the Chesterfield City Council has given the business community. It is letting two commercial developers of outlet malls use special sales taxes to pay for construction while Chesterfield Mall and other retailers were never given such a deal. Now it is restricting opening hours of stores in Chesterfield Valley while competitors in Chesterfield Mall can have all night 48-hour sales.

THE WILDHORSE CREEK ROAD ACCIDENT or OH THE HATE FROM THE CARDINAL NATION: On Thanksgiving Cardinal third baseman David Freese was involved in a one car accident on Wild Horse Creek Road in Wildwood. The County Police reported that Freese told them he swerved to avoid a deer and he had not been drinking..

The fact that Freese claimed to have swerved to avoid a deer is not an unusual event in Wildwood, where the County Police who are under contract to patrol the city have an unofficial motto, “To Protect and Swerve” due to the huge deer population.

There was a photograph that ran in the Post-Dispatch that showed Freese’s high dollar import SUV into a tree.

However a week later columnist Bill McClellan wrote a column that included two photographs from the property owner at the accident scene that painted a slightly different picture. The photos showed how Freese took out 300 feet of wooden fence, then hit a couple of trees before coming to rest head-on against a bigger tree.



accident scene.

Here is the first photo we saw from the



Here are the photos sent to Bill McClellan by homeowner Charlie Duff.

Bill wrote an interesting column suggesting that Mr. Duff believed that perhaps more than just a deer was involved in this accident. The County Police report did list “speed” as a contributing circumstance. To take out over 300 feet of fence and still hit a tree hard enough to total a SUV might make some of us believe that Freese was well above the 30 MPH speed limit.

Bill interviewed the first people arriving at the scene who were in the immediate area. No one suggested that Freese had been drinking. However they all had some doubts about if the accident was simply due to a deer or if there was a deer at all.

http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/columns/bill-mcclellan/property-owner-isn-t-buying-david-freese-s-deer-story/article_e85ee795-9a32-56eb-a92a-fee48e3fc21.html

That was things got nasty. There were 111 comments to Bill’s column. First I have to wonder how stupid we have become over the years. Most referred to Bill’s column as an “article.” Bill writes opinion columns and has for 30 years.

The outright hatred toward Bill and the Post-Dispatch for writing about Freese or the Cardinals was scary. Next were the comments accusing the property owner, Mr. Duff of wanting 15 minutes of fame or worse. Regardless of Mr. Duff’s motive he helped tell the whole story that was hidden in the original reports. .

I have a feeling that our Chesterfield readers who live off Wild Horse Creek Road got a different opinion after reading about and seeing the entire damage.

Finally to the people who comment how this accident was a non-news story. GET REAL...this is St. Louis and the MVP of the 2011 Playoffs and World Series is a news story and will be for the rest of his life. The baseball players are the same as Hollywood stars are to the rest of the country. While baseball is a slowly dying sport around the

country, it isn't here. Being a popular star and totaling a SUV after having been in other serious accidents is a legit story...period. Movie stars who give photographers the finger are featured on TV and in the papers...in our town a star baseball player being involved in an one-car accident that removed 300 feet of fence and total's a Land Rover is news either on a slow or busy news day.

Here are some of the 111 comments to Bill's column...my favorite is the guy making a comment about the column by saying Bill's columns are the reason why he doesn't read the Post-Dispatch...uh...this makes no sense.

"Give it a rest. The homeowner wants attention."...Debbie Plosser-Needy

"Personally I think it is disgusting, Bill McClellan, that you would publish this article about what this Duff thinks."...Brandi Willard

"The property owner just wants a little fame."...Mick Lite St. Peters

"This homeowner is just wrong, as is the Post-Dispatch and McClellan for making this a published story."...Tom Otis Burr Ridge, Illinois

"This is why I don't read the Post-Dispatch. They print too many pointless articles like this one."...Chris Pratt Manchester, MO.

AND MY FAVORITE:

"If it is a legitimate deer, the driver has ways of shutting the whole car down."...Ryan Campbell Urbana. Illinois

A WITNESS STEPS UP: Bill followed that up with a column on Wednesday December 5th after a witness to the accident contacted him. She was a West County mom with people in her car when Freese passed driving so fast he was already losing control just before he started his wooden fence removal. She said there was no deer.

http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/columns/bill-mcclellan/mcclellan-david-freese-column-stirs-up-the-critics/article_cca53fe7-ffd6-523f-bb42-11eae9bd143f.html

Déjà VU ALL OVER AGAIN: I wrote a column for Patch back in 2011 after the World Series about Freese. Although it did not get 111 comments more than a few people took the time to write and tell me I was a jerk. I based the column on what I saw over

nine years of spending 140 days a year covering young professional baseball players and how I had my fingers crossed for Freese. Here is the column:

Here's Hoping World Series MVP Freese Lives the Good Life

By John Hoffmann

David Freese got three strikes but wasn't out. Let's hope he takes advantage of it.



Photos (2)



In nine years of covering minor league baseball, I wrote stories of success, failure, inspiration and some of sadness. Alcohol played a part in the saddest stories.

For the record, I quit drinking when I turned 21. Actually, I got a hiatal hernia when I was 21. It was before one-a-day pills for heartburn. No amount of Tums, Roloids or Maalox could make drinking beer or bourbon a pleasant experience for me.

David Freese was not so lucky.

This is a hometown kid (Wildwood) who in 2011 was making the big league minimum of \$414,500. After his union dues, Freese was making around \$400,000. Freese was the League Championship Series and World Series MVP.

Freese has succeeded despite getting an extra strike. He has already had three strikes. As a 19-year-old, Freese was arrested for DWI in Ballwin.

In 2007 he was arrested by Riverside County California deputies for "Public Intoxication plus Obstructing and Resisting an Officer" at the Lake Elsinore Hotel Casino, not far from where Freese had just finished playing the 2007 season for the San Diego Padres minor league team.

Believe me when I say this, you have to work at it to get arrested for being "Drunk in Public." I know, I was in law enforcement for 30 years. Cops hate making public intoxication arrests. You are given multiplied opportunities to "quiet down," "go away," "shut up and sit down," or "now is a good time for you to leave" before you give a frustrated officer no choice but to arrest you.

Shortly after the arrest, the Padres traded Freese to the Cardinals for Jim Edmonds.

Lastly, there was a 2009 DWI arrest following a crash in Maryland Heights. Freese's blood alcohol level was 0.23%. He broke a foot when he crashed his car.

His agent, Phil Tannebaum, was quoted after the arrest as saying: "David is not an alcoholic by any stretch of the imagination." Do you think anyone was buying that statement?

The Cardinals announced that Freese was entering the team's substance assistance program.

Then this year, I got a bad feeling after the Cards won the league title and 2011 World Series, to see Freese in a shirt drenched in beer and cheap champagne. But after the World Series, Freese seemed to be the perfect hero...a local kid making the minimum salary on a team filled with superstars. He said all the right things on national TV and genuinely seemed like a nice person.

While I no longer root for teams, I do root for players. I will be rooting for David Freese. I'll be rooting for him to improve his fielding, hit .300 and get 100 RBIs for the next few seasons.

I will also be rooting that he avoids that fourth strike. He has done pretty good so far—after getting that extra strike.

About this column: This article is the work and opinion of its author John Hoffmann.

CHESTERFIELD SINGER TO HAVE CHRISTMAS SHOW AT JAZZ CLUB:

Chesterfield jazz and standards singer and top self promoter, Joe Mancuso will be performing on Friday December 21 from 7:30-10:30pm at Robbie's House of Jazz at 20 Allen Street in Webster Groves (behind the Straub's store on West Lockwood).



Joe Mancuso's trio will expand for a Christmas show on December 21 at Robbie's House of Jazz

Joining Joe will be St. Louis music legend Joe Bozzi on the trumpet and vibes. There is a \$15 cover charge which includes some food plus Christmas songs and songs from the Great American Songbook.

MORE JAZZ CHRISTMAS THIS WEDNESDAY ON KEHRS MILL ROAD: The Route 66 Jazz Orchestra, a big band, will present their first of two Christmas shows this Wednesday at Sky Music Room on Kehrs Mill Road south of Clayton Road at the Barn of Lucerne. The show on December 12 starts at 8pm. There is a modest \$10 cover. Besides the 18-piece big band there will be four vocalists featured in the show.



A week later the band will perform on December 19th at 7pm at the Unity Church on Butler Hill Road between I-55 and Tesson Ferry Road.

WHY YOU SHOULDN'T BELIEVE MUCH OF WHAT YOU READ IN THE WEST

MAGAZINE: Please don't think I'm some liberal who hates any publication with a conservative voice. Hardly! I always preferred the Globe-Democrat to the Post-Dispatch for instance. But having been involved in West County politics and seen the West Magazine reporting over the years I have to say they flunk the fair and balanced test.

When I was a Town and Country alderman West Magazine never seemed to be able to interview me or quote my comments at meetings over bills and resolutions I introduced on such topics as taking action against bars that sold liquor to minors, Cell Phone While Driving Bans and an Inattentive Driving ordinance. But they always were able to interview my opponents, starting with Mayor & Cigarette Lobbyist Jon Dalton. One side of the story is apparently the best way for them to go.

The same goes for West Magazine's coverage of the Deer issue in T&C. Time after time the magazine quotes the very vocal and also very small minority of the deer lovers against lethal deer control, without getting verifiable quotes from deer control experts. .

Now they ran an article claiming the Town and Country budget is balanced. Well it isn't...the 2013 budget has a small \$2,427,890 deficit. This is not really open for debate as it is printed in the T&C budget. But a West Magazine stringer wrote a story quoting an alderman saying how the budget is balanced. This budget has five components and only the General Fund showed a very modest surplus of \$14,020. All the rest of the parts of the budget have steep and deep deficits.

In Chesterfield the West Magazine freelancers never show up for the agenda meetings back in a conference room before the regular meetings. It is at these meetings where you get the real inside information on what is going on.

You decide if she has her head about two feet in the sand...here is an email exchange I had with the editor her last week. .

On Dec 6, 2012, at 5:21 PM, John Hoffmann wrote:

Kate,

The headline on page 15 of this week's West Magazine is false as is the article. The head is "Town & Country balances 2013 budget"

In the article when Molly James quotes alderman Phil Behnen as saying the budget is balance he was referring to the 2012 budget that was originally a deficit budget also but came in balanced. That cannot be true about the 2013 budget. The 2013 budget it is anything but balanced.

There are five components to the T&C Budget. They are:

General Fund

Road Fund

Capital Improvement Fund

Parks & Storm water fund

Safety & Training Fund

Four of the five portions of the budget are in deep deficit conditions. Only the general fund has a very small surplus of \$14,020 that most don't expect to be around at the end of the year.

The total 2013 Town and country Budget has a deficit of \$2,427,890. **It is in the red for \$2,427,890**

The article was misleading and confusing. The headline was FALSE.

John Hoffmann

314-835-0751

From: Kate Uptergrove [<mailto:editorwest@newsmagazinenetwork.com>]

Sent: Friday, December 07, 2012 4:40 PM

To: John Hoffmann

Subject: Re: false information in head and story

Dear Mr. Hoffmann,

I asked the writer of the article in question, Molly James, to confirm her information. Her reply is below:

I spoke with Alderman Behnen today and he clarified that the balanced budget applies to the general fund and when the municipality says "balanced fund" they are referring to the general fund not any of the specific funds, such as the Road Fund. So, yes the budget is balanced. Although there may be some discrepancies or fluctuation in the other funds, the over all general fund budget is considered to be balanced.

It is not the intention of the paper to mislead anyone or provide false information. In this case, having spoken with Molly about what was presented at the meeting and having received her reply above, I feel that your complaint is with the perception Town & Country is putting forth. Should you wish to write a

letter to the editor about your concerns regarding the Town & Country budget, you certainly have that option.

Thank you,

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editorwest@newsmagazinenetwork.com

From: John Hoffmann [mailto:johnhoffmann@charter.net]

Sent: Friday, December 07, 2012 4:51 PM

To: 'Kate Uptergrove'

Cc: 'H Wayne Crawford'; pbehen@sbcglobal.net; 'ozsa@att.net'; 'CHUCK LENZ'

Subject: RE: false information in head and story

Again Kate...there are five parts of the city budget...the general fund is just part of it. For political reasons Molly was suckered into claiming there is a balanced budget. There is not. As a former T&C Alderman I watch the budget closely and attend the finance commission meetings. THERE IS NOT A BALANCED BUDGET IN T&C IT IS \$2.427,000 IN THE RED...despite what WEST MAGAZINE wants to incorrectly report.

John Hoffmann

From: John Hoffmann [mailto:johnhoffmann@charter.net]

Sent: Sunday, December 09, 2012 12:32 PM

To: 'Kate Uptergrove'

Subject: the budget for you

**CITY OF TOWN AND COUNTRY
2013 BUDGET REVENUES OVER (UNDER) EXPENDITURES**

FUND DESCRIPTION	2013 Beginning Fund Balance	Revenues	Expenditures	Transfers In (Out)	Change in Fund Balance	2013 Ending Fund Balance
General Fund	15,108,411	9,304,680	9,290,660		14,020	15,122,431
Road Fund	1,233,954	2,455,900	3,396,460		(940,560)	293,394
Capital Improvements Fund	895,046	1,022,100	2,594,160	1,000,000	(572,060)	322,986
Parks & Stormwater Fund	1,385,244	1,267,000	1,173,810	(1,000,000)	(906,810)	478,434
Safety & Training Fund	47,502	41,020	63,500		(22,480)	25,022
TOTALS ALL FUNDS	\$ 18,670,157	\$ 14,090,700	\$ 16,518,590	\$ -	\$ (2,427,890)	\$ 16,242,267

Kate...this is the T&C Budget from the T&C Finance Director, broken down in the five sections. The General Fund is NOT THE BUDGET, but just part of it. Please look at the fifth column it gives the surpluses and deficits (\$000) for each part of the budget. The General Fund has a \$14,000 surplus, which is not much at all. The Road Fund has a \$940,000 deficit, the Capital Improvements Fund has a \$572,060 deficit, the Parks Fund has a \$906,810 deficit and the Safety & Training fund has a \$22,480 deficit. Add it all up you get the total T&C Budget which has a \$2,427,890 deficit.

This is not a quote from a local politician who wants residents to think everything is fine. It is the actual document. It was available to your reporter. It is a shame that your staff apparently cannot read a simple budget and accurately report what it says.

John Hoffmann

CHRISTMAS HOUSES: Here is my take on Christmas lights. The most mind blowing display in the metro area has to be the corner house at Ladue Road and Wexler Manor two long blocks east of Mason Road in Creve Coeur. The display has its own radio station, movie screen and lights that pulsate with the music. It covers the one-plus acre lot. While it is perfect Snoburbia art, that costs a fortune to put up each year and shuts down the small street which becomes clogged with traffic, it is also like an annual drug. I return every year, often dropping a new toy or money in the box for Toys for Tots. Sure it is tacky, but I have sat through the entire 45-minute presentation just to see what is new.



This just a small portion of the Christmas Lights along Ladue Road two blocks east of Mason Road.

THE OTHER HOUSE: Then there is the house on West Jackson two doors from Lockwood in Webster Groves. The residents change the display every year. There are lights, but nothing pulsates, there is no radio station just for the display, you have to bring your own music. The homeowners put up the display over a couple of weeks, while the people on Ladue Road have cranes showing up the day before Halloween.

It is also a Christmas drug, like the McRib being back to McDonalds...I have to go once and try one (the meat is tasteless, its the sauce and onions that make this a hit) every year in my one of my rare trips to McDonalds. I also have to go back and see the Jackson Christmas House. Last year a lot of people were disappointed when there was no Christmas house and the homeowners took a Christmas cruise. But it is back this year.



The Christmas House on West Jackson in Webster Groves.

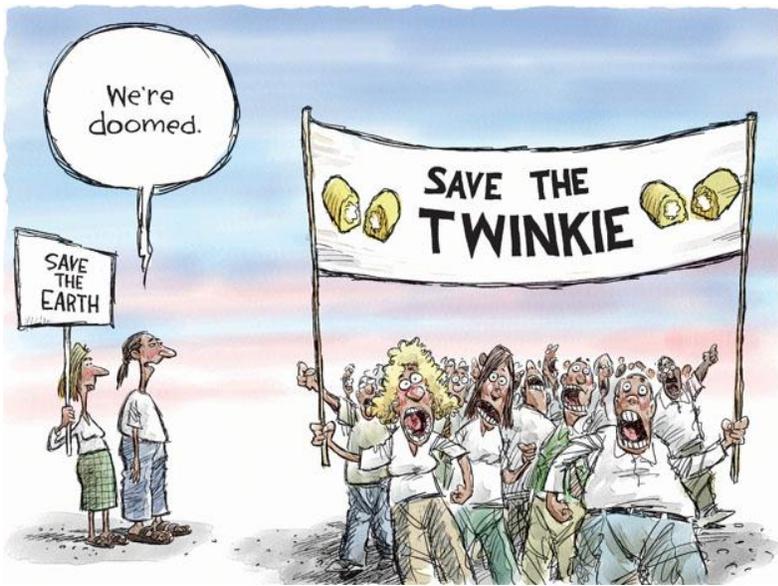
CHANGES HEADED TO THE RITZ: If you like stopping by the lobby of the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Clayton on the weekends for music, you might want to do it soon or plan sometime in late February.

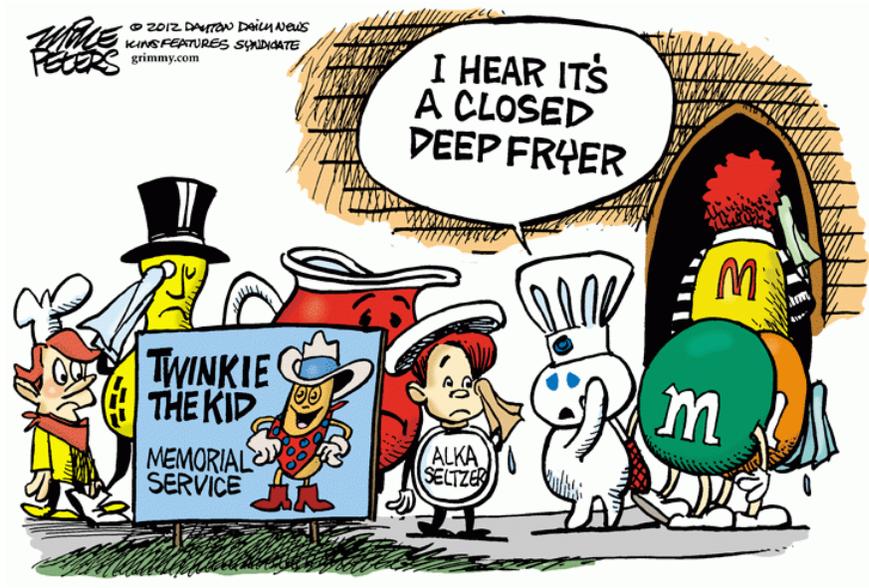
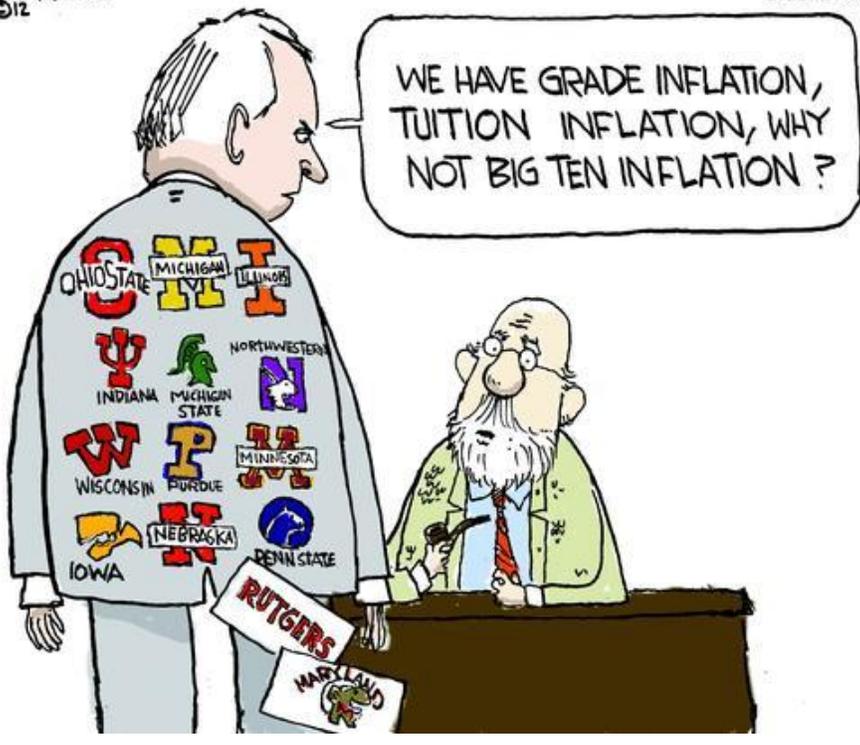
I was at the Ritz on Saturday night and learned from the staff that the lobby is going to be remodeled starting in January and lasting anywhere from three to six weeks depending on who you ask.

Once a politician always a politician: When I was leaving the Ritz on Saturday I saw a man waiting for valet parking to retrieve his car. It was East St. Louis Mayor Alvin Parks. As I walked by Mayor Parks he asked how I was doing, like I might be a potential voter. This guy has a great smile and I bet if I stopped and told him about the arthritis in my hips, he'd politely nod as if he was concerned.

I did chuckle at seeing Mayor Parks in Clayton at the Ritz. After all there are numerous entertainment venues in East St. Louis to choose from and he chose the Ritz. Of course there have been no shootings at the Ritz in recent memory but a drunk did get the key to the wrong room, entered the room and got into bed with a 14-year-old girl. He fled and was arrested in his underwear near the lobby.

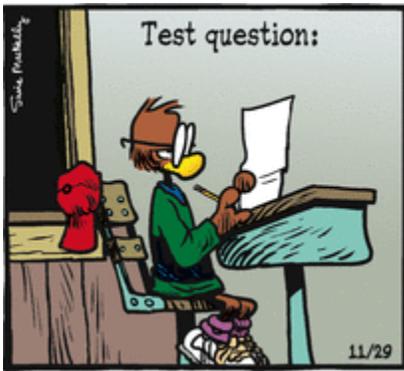
CARTOONS:







Bad shoplifters.



What do you call
someone who favors
term limits for
politicians?



