

EX ALDERMAN NEWSLETTER 157 AND CHESTERFIELD 102



By John Hoffmann

December 10, 2014

STOPLIGHTS OUT AT CLAYTON ROAD AND MASON ROAD UNTIL AT LEAST THURSDAY AND MAYBE FRIDAY: Early last Saturday morning a one car accident into a utility pole knocked out the power to the stop lights at the Clayton Road and Mason Road intersection. It also took down power and control lines to the hanging stoplights. Temporary stop signs were put up. However there is no concerted attempt to fix the dark traffic lights. The lights are under the control of the St. Louis County Highway Department. There was a crew at the intersection on Monday accessing the damage.



Town and Country Police Chief Pat Kranz said the County Highway Traffic Light Unit told the department it would be Thursday or Friday before the lights are working again. Traffic has actually been moving better during mid day through the temporary 4-way stop intersection. Morning rush hours is another story and on Monday traffic was a mess, with police officers having to direct traffic. Traffic direction is somewhat a lost art for suburban cops, who rarely ever have to do it.

It seems as if nothing has really changed even in the last days of the Charlie Dooley administration. Under Dooley's leadership it sure seemed as if problems in North County were addressed a lot faster than those in West County.

SALE OF WIRTH PROPERTY TO THE CITY GOES THROUGH ON MONDAY DECEMBER 8, 2014. The City of Town and Country's reserve took another hit as the

purchase of the 8.8 acre Wirth property located on the south side of Clayton Road east of Mason Road closed on Monday. The 8.8 lot with the front acre zoned commercial and the other 7-plus acres zoned residential was purchased for \$2.3 million after the Wirth family was unable to sell it for the last 10 years.



Part of the resolution passed by the BOA required the property to be assessed at least \$3-million. City Administrator Gary Hoelzer told us the assessment came in at \$3.4 million.

TWO ALDERWOMEN UPSET WITH MAYOR'S NOMINEES FOR TOWN SQUARE

TASK FORCE: Mayor/Cigarette Lobbyist/Ethics Commission Violator Jon Dalton as ready to announce 11 members to serve on the Town Square Task Force, which is suppose to decide what the city should do with the Wirth property. But withdrew his announcement after opposition popped up. (Nothing like spending \$2.3 million for something you don't know what to do with!)

Alderwomen Amy Anderson and Gussie Crawford did not like the fact that the list of nominees did not include anyone from the Wheatfield subdivision which is just west of the property.



"I think someone from Wheatfield needs to be on that task force. They have skin in the game. It is important to have someone on the task force from an area that will impacted," said Anderson after Dalton hem-hawed around and suggested people from Wheatfield could be on a sub-committee when opposition popped up.



"I feel the same way as Amy does," said Crawford. "The people in Wheatfield hate me for the way I voted to expand the Longview Park parking lot, but they deserve having someone on the task force."

FROM THE DECEMBER PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING...I

CALL BULL SHIT! In a 2011 episode of South Park, Kyle Called **shenanigans** at the site of a travelling carnival over being cheated. Since then the phrase has been changed by some to "I call bull shit" used in response to what some claim is clearly false or without merit statements or proposals. That was the case for just part of the presentation by the the owners of Town and Country Crossing, Ramco-Gershenson Properties from Farmington Hills, Michigan.

Ramco-Gershenson have plans to build onto the southern section of buildings in the shopping center and add a Stein Mart store. They also want to have a drive through national coffee shop and used the phrase "fast casual" dining numerous times mentioning getting Panera and BreadCo type tenant.

Ed Eickhoff claimed there was a need for a high caliber coffee shop in the area, but would not give the name of the retailer, saying he needed the approval of the city before he searches of a tenant. This is where I SCREAM TO MYSELF..."I CALL BULLSHIT."



Let's check the inventory of coffee shops in the area of Clayton Road and Woods Mill Road. Here is the current roster of coffee shops:

- 1) Starbucks...it is in the Target Store in the Town and Country Crossing and run by Target. It is 600 feet away from where Eickhoff claims there is a need for a "high caliber coffee shop." This also covers the southwest corner of the intersection.



- 2) In the southeast corner inside the front of Schnucks Supermarket is a Kaldi Coffee shop.



- 3) On the northeast corner is an Einstein Brothers Bagel and Coffee Shop.



- 4) On the northwest corner is a McDonalds, whose coffee has improved immensely over the years and is now a big seller.



- 5) One block to the west at Clayton Road and Henry Road is the 6-North Cafe, which is a locally owned and operated coffee shop.



So at this point, while I think T&C Crossing should build out and have a directory sign on Clayton Road...I now also realize that the vice-president of the company is in town shoveling shit at furious rate toward the members of the Planning and Zoning Commission.



Ed Eickhoff might think there is a "need" from Ramco-Gershenson to sign a 10-year lease with a national coffee retailer or a Panera Beard store. But I don't think there is any actual "need" for another coffee shop at Town and Country Crossing.

WALKERS ON YOUR MARK: During his pitch Eickhoff proclaimed how they would have musical groups on the promenade by the lake, making it a place for people to congregate. Then he said how the shopping center would have "walking clubs" just like the indoor malls, but with custom walking trails around the property. Then he rang the cash register and said there would be fitness trainers along the walking trails "for walking club members." That could be a tough job from the middle of December to the end of February.



A LOCAL TEAM THAT IS PART OF THE COMMUNITY: Ed Eickhoff made a gratuitous statement how Town and Country Crossing, a shopping center with 40-to-50 percent empty storefronts, was going to be a specialty center that creates a place within the community. He then introduced his "local team." Consulting engineer George Stock is definitely local. He lives in T&C and is active dealing with local hospital expansions in Town and County and Chesterfield.



Architect Chris Chiodini makes a presentation as John King, who is such a big part of the Town and Country community that he has sent threatening letters to residents if they voiced opposition to project his client, an ex-convict drug dealer, wanted to put up near their property.

The architect Chris Chiodini was present and also spoke. Then Eickhoff introduced zoning lawyer John King...who seemed to be ready to fall out of his chair at any moment. King is a great person to make a member of the community. If you remember (and I hope you do because I brought it up twice in recent months) in 2008 while representing an ex-convict drug dealer and someone connected to questionable internet sales schemes, he sent a letter to two households of Town and Country residents threatening them with lawsuits if they exercised their constitutional rights and made

complaints with city officials over issues involving their ex-con neighbor. What a wonderful person to pick for your group...John King who threatens part of your customer base.

A COMPETING DOWNTOWN WITH THE ONE JUST PURCHASED BY MAYOR/REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER JON DALTON: If Ed Eickhoff really was part of the community he might have avoided making one statement.

"I want to make this the quasi downtown of Town and Country," said Eickhoff apparently unaware that Mayor Jon Dalton has repeatedly proclaimed that Mason Road and Clayton Road was the unofficial downtown of Town and Country and then talked the Aldermanic Board to approve a \$2.3 million purchase of 8.8 acres of property that the Werth family has been unable to sell to over a decade.

As usual Mayor Dalton, who is a member of the P & Z Commission was a no show.

PLANS DON'T PASS...ARE CONTINUED OVER CONCERNS: It was a unanimous vote not to pass the plans but to continue the matter to the January meeting. Here are some of the concerns:

POINT:

"I have trouble with **the signage** at that point (Clayton and Woods Mill Roads). It blocks the vista and doesn't add any value." ...**Kraig Kreikemeier** (Of course Kreikemeier doesn't think customers knowing a smaller merchant in a shopping center adds any value to the success of the merchant who is also a sales tax provider and a person from the St. Louis community.)

"My concern is we don't have the numbers and percentages for the **drive through** like we had provided for Jimmy Johns." ...P&Z Chairman **Ron Sulewski**.

"I have to express some concern of vehicle traffic exiting that **drive through** (coffee shop) and a car making a left turn into the area (from main drive off of west Clayton Road entrance)." ...Alderman **Fred Meyland-Smith**

"You are **eliminating parking spaces** (to the east of the proposed Stein Mart) and forcing customers for the new anchor to use the spaces in front of existing stores taking their parking spaces. If the goal is to maintain small tenants for the mix you are eliminating their parking spaces"...**Dennis Bolazina**



The parking lot and green space next to these empty store fronts would be used for part of the new Stein Mart store.

"The exact **traffic configuration** around Building M (coffee shop) needs improvement, "...**Meyland-Smith**

"I'm have trouble **not knowing who** (the company) is going in their building (proposed coffee shop)." ... **Kreikemeier**

COUNTER POINT: The fact this turned out not to be a love fest apparently played heavily on Eickhoff who began to snap at the Commission. Here are some of his comments:

"I need to get this drive through approved to get someone to sign a lease."

"What I'm trying to do today is give you a realistic plan."

"We are trying to be part of the community."

"The reality today in retailing it is the national retailers who are renting the space. Maybe sometime in the future the mom and pop retailers will make a comeback."

A SHOPPING CENTER WITH AN INTERESTING CONFLICT OR IDENTITY CRISIS:

The Town and Country Crossing shopping center sends out mix signals to shoppers. They are a few shops looking at one segment of the shopper base, but other shops looking for an opposite group. Here are some of the different types of shopping experiences:

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Expensive | Cotton Babies |
| Expensive | Ginger Bay Salon |
| Expensive | Whole Foods |
| Moderately Expensive | Coopers Hawk |
| Moderately Expensive | Bistro |
| Very Expensive | Cafe Napoli II |
| Inexpensive to Moderate | Target |
| Inexpensive | Good Cents Sub Shop |
| Inexpensive | Qdoba Mexican Grill |
| Very Inexpensive to Cheap | Dollar Tree One-Stop |



THE MISSING MAYOR: Part of the job of a Town and Country mayor is to serve on the City's Planning and Zoning Commission. It is a job requirement that Mayor/Cigarette Lobbyist/ User of Eminent Domain to Snatch a Widow's Property for an Underfunded Nightclub District Jon Dalton doesn't take too seriously.

Dalton has an important role on the P & Z Commission. It is rarely used. Of course as we have been pointing out for a number of years Dalton hates to vote, because if he does vote he is going to piss someone off. At P & Z meeting you are either going to piss off some residents (voters) or a wealthy developer. The last thing a lobbyist in Jefferson City wants to do is a piss off someone connected to a business with money.

According to city records in 2014 there were eight P & Z meetings and Dalton managed to attend two. In 2013 there were seven meetings. He again managed to show up to two. In 2012 he had a perfect record 0-for-6. 2011 we was 1-for-6.



Dalton at the August P&Z meeting one of the

few he has attended during his time as mayor.

In 2014 Dalton attended the August P & Z meeting where there was nothing controversial. He did attend the May meeting where the St. Austin Catholic school rezoning of the convent occupied by two nuns on Woods Mill Road was on the agenda, but Dalton did not have to vote as the very heated issue was continued. When it did come up for a vote in July Dalton was not present. The vote was 4-3 to approve. The Board of Aldermen later voted to ignore the recommendation and vote not to approve the rezoning and site development plan on a 0-6 vote.

In the last four years Dalton, who lives in the same ward as where the City Hall is located has only managed to show up 21.7-percent of the P & Z meetings. A city ordinance says that people who show up for fewer than 50% of meetings should be removed from boards and commissions. Unfortunately only the voters can remove Dalton.

Here is Dalton attendance record as a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission:

2014

| <u>Present</u> | <u>Absent</u> |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| May | January |
| August | March 4 |
| | March 26 |
| | July |
| | September |
| | December |

2013

| <u>Present</u> | <u>Absent</u> |
|----------------|---------------|
| March 4 | March 26 |
| July 24 | May |
| | July 30 |
| | September |
| | December |

2012

January
March
June
July
August
October

2011

June January
 March
 May
 August
 October
 November

HOW MUCH THEY MAKE: Here is the 2015 chart of Town and Country employee pay by position:

| | Exempt Managerial ANNUAL | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | Minimum | MID-POINT | MAXIMUM |
| <u>Administrative Services</u> | | | |
| City Administrator | \$102,362 | \$127,946 | \$153,530 |
| City Clerk | 56,602 | 70,746 | 84,890 |
| Finance Director | 83,954 | 104,936 | 125,918 |
| Executive | 41,184 | 51,480 | 61,776 |
| Administrative Assistant | | | |
| <u>Police</u> | | | |
| Chief of Police | 87,516 | 109,382 | 131,248 |
| Captain | 71,968 | 89,934 | 107,926 |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|---------|---------|
| Lieutenant | 74,672 | 85,436 | 97,760 |
| <u>Public Works/Planning</u> | | | |
| Director of Planning & Public Works | 82,186 | 102,726 | 123,266 |
| Planner | 56,602 | 70,746 | 84,916 |
| Code Official | 56,602 | 70,746 | 84,916 |
| Project Manager | 56,602 | 70,746 | 84,916 |
| <u>Parks</u> | | | |
| Parks & Recreation Director | 75,036 | 93,782 | 112,528 |

POLICE OFFICER:

| | |
|----------|----------|
| Starting | \$55,250 |
| 1-year | \$57,616 |
| 2-years | \$59,904 |
| 3-years | \$62,270 |
| 4-years | \$64,584 |
| 5-years | \$66,950 |
| 6-years | \$69,264 |
| 7-years | \$71,587 |
| 8-years | \$73,970 |
| 9-years | \$76,258 |
| Corporal | \$79,222 |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| <u>Administrative Services</u> | | | |
| Accounting Clerk | 40,560 | 48,672 | 56,784 |
| <u>Court</u> | | | |
| Court Administrator | 46,098 | 55,328 | 64,558 |
| Deputy Court Clerk | 35,594 | 42,692 | 49,816 |
| <u>Police</u> | | | |
| Police Sergeant | 74,204 | 83,512 | 92,820 |
| Police Clerk | 37,232 | 44,668 | 52,104 |
| <u>Public Works/Planning</u> | | | |
| Administrative Assistant | 34,658 | 41,600 | 48,542 |
| <u>Roads</u> | | | |
| Maintenance Worker | 40,066 | 48,100 | 56,108 |
| <u>Parks</u> | | | |
| Facilities Coordinator | 39,000 | 46,800 | 54,600 |

| | | | |
|--------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Maintenance Worker | 40,066 | 48,100 | 56,108 |
|--------------------|--------|--------|--------|

Administrative Services/
Support Clerk \$ 10.00 - \$ 22.00
Part-time Court Clerk \$ 15.00 - \$ 22.00
Part-time Police Officer \$ 30.00 - \$ 30.00
Part-time Community Service Officer \$ 10.00 - \$ 22.00
On-Call Personnel \$ 10.00 - \$ 22.00
Seasonal Maintenance Workers \$ 8.50 - \$ 16.00

UNAPPROVED CHESTERFIELD NEWSLETTER 102



December 10, 2014

MAYOR'S VETOES OF FOUR ITEMS IN 2015 BUDGET SHOULD BRING OUT INTERESTING BATTLES AT JANUARY 5 MEETING:

The 2 o'clock email five hours before the city council meeting by Mayor Bob Nation announcing he would veto four sections of the 2015 City Budget did not sit well with a number of council members. But there was no attempt to have a special meeting before the New Year to attempt to override the vetoes. The battle will occur in January.



Mayor Nation explaining why he made vetos.

On stopping funding and sending the matter of two more SRO police officers
(making 4 officers for 13 elementary schools) back to the public safety committee these
are some of the comments made:

Dan Hurt "I don't think it will make any difference going back to committee. This has
been discussed for years."

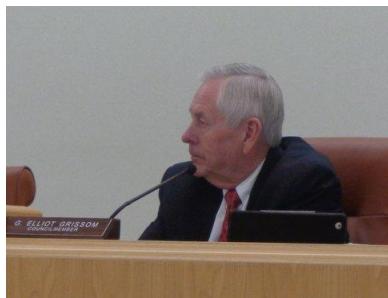


Dan Hurt

Mayor Bob Nation "If this was a priority it should have come through the committee."

Dan Hurt. "This is not a new discussion. It has been an ongoing discussion."

Elliot Grissom "What is the long term plan for SROs. Is it one or two years or is it one
for each school?"



Elliot Grissom

Dan Hurt "My read on this is there would be a minimum of four (SRO officers)."

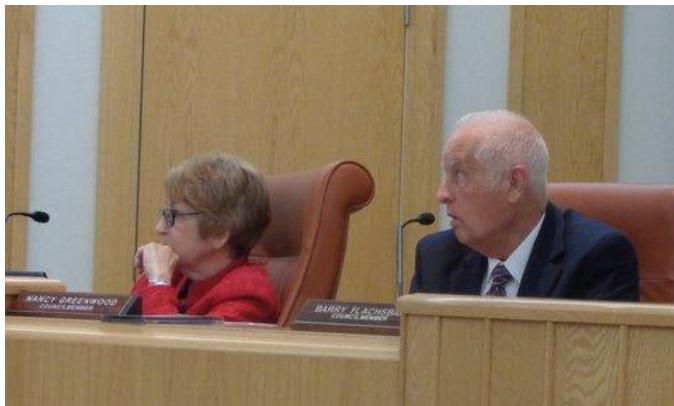
Nancy Greenwood "One of our biggest responsibilities is providing safety for our
citizens."

Barry Flachsbart "I have long been opposed to committees controlling the council. I
think the process of thinking about it until January 5 is preferable."

Elliot Grissom made a motion to amend the budget by taking out the 2 SRO officers and
send the matter to the public safety committee. It failed to pass on a 3-to-4 vote with

Grissom, Mike Casey and Derek Grier voting to remove the positions from the budget and Dan Hurt, Barry Flachsbart, Nancy Greenwood and Connie Fults voting against the motion.

However, even if the missing Bruce DeGroot votes to keep the SRO officers it appears as if overturning the veto would be one vote short. Six votes are needed to overturn a veto.



Nancy Greenwood and Barry Flachsbart, a former mayor and a former interim mayor.

ON THE VETO STOPPING THE FUNDING FOR PARK DEPARTMENT ART UNIT:

Mayor Bob Nation (said at the agenda meeting) "I don't recognize the urgent need to respond to the demise of Chesterfield Arts."

TIMING OF THE VETO ANNOUNCEMENT:

Connie Fults I really don't understand your timing. The council has spoken and voted for this budget. We need to pass the 2015 budget in 2014. If we have to come back on December 24 to pass a budget for 2015, I'll be here."



Mayor Bob Nation: "Councilwoman Fults I'd suggest you check Missouri Statutes 77.270 and 77.280 (concerning his timing of the vetoes)."

MAYOR'S TIMING ON THE BUDGET: In most cities it is basically the mayor's budget (normally prepared by staff until it is presented in a first draft). The first draft which technically comes from Mayor Nation had the 3-percent employee raises and the \$250 gift cards in it. In other words he presented it and now he wants to take it away.

However, Mayor Nation tells us that might be the way people think it works in Chesterfield, but over the years the city administrator Michael Herring has taken over a lot of power and basically hijacked the process. Mayor Nation told us that the administrator presents the budget to the Finance Committee on first draft and not to the mayor.

"It is predominately in the hands of the city administrator. The process in my view has become flawed and needs more transparency than allowing just the city administrator to propose the budget," said Nation.

In our talk Nation was clearly frustrated over what he has had to deal with this year.

"Last spring I was asking staff about the pay plan and it was like pulling teeth to get answers. Perhaps we (city staff and council) should be paying more attention to the CPI (Consumer Price Index) than we are," said Nation who points out the CPI for 2014 is 2.15% and thinks the 3-percent pay raise for employees should be 2.5%.

"It is a sufficient challenge to add anything to the budget as mayor," Nation told us.

"I CAN'T SAY IT"...NANCY GREENWOOD WHEN INTRODUCING A BILL: We had reported in earlier newsletters how Police Chief Ray Johnson requested a prostitution ordinance, because if a prostitution arrest is made at a hotel and is not connected to a larger operation the county prosecutor's office will often send it back asking that charges be filed in municipal court. There were no charges in the Chesterfield ordinance book other than Operating a Business Without a License said Chief Johnson.

With Greenwood being the chair of the Health and Public Safety Committee it was her job to introduce the prostitution bill for a final vote, but Greenwood didn't want to say the word "prostitution." "I can't say it...I'm introducing the bill about operating a business without a license," she said

THE TOUGH ARM OF CHRIS KOSTER'S OFFICE WHEN DEALING WITH SUNSHINE LAW COMPLAINTS: When the City of Chesterfield listed on their website for weeks a Finance and Administration Committee to be held on September 29, only to change meeting date mid-day on September 22 to September 22 at 5:30, I filed a complaint with the Attorney General Chris Koster's office. On November 17 Koster's

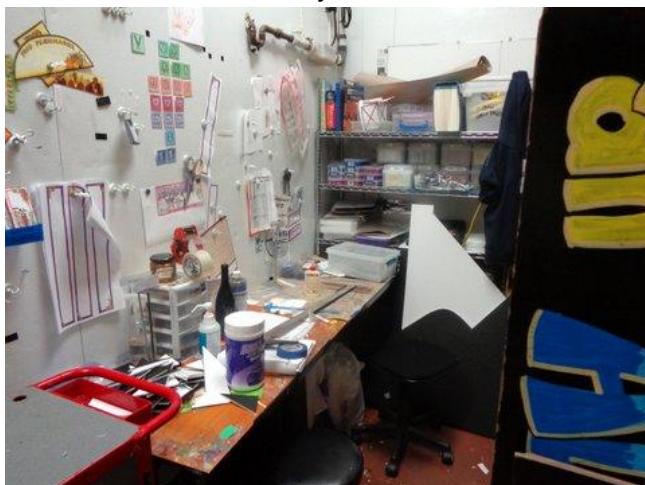
office sent Mayor Bob Nation a letter explaining meeting times and dates have to be posted at least 24 hours in advance (not 5 hours in advance) and asked for a response by no later than December 10.

THEY'RE BACK! The famous people attended the December 1, City Council Agenda meeting thanks to the Director of City Services' neck tie. The last time we saw Mike Geisel in this special tie was July of 2013.



THE ART OF TRADER JOE'S: At the November 3 meeting of the Chesterfield City Council, Community Services and Economic Development Director Libby Tucker presented an award to the Traders Joe's in Chesterfield for the local scenes painted on the walls inside the store.

An assistant manager Dan Bagot was there with an employee who I thought was the main artist for the art work on the walls. I was wrong. I went to visit the store a week later and Dan explained that the store has its own "art department" consisting of employees who produce hand painted signs advertising specials and featured items. There is actually a studio in the back behind a large walk-in refrigerator.



The Chesterfield Trader Joe's art studio

The artist for almost all the art work on the walls in the Chesterfield Store is Karoline "Anna" Aschenbach. She no longer works full time at the store, but comes in in the morning doing four hours of art work a week. Stores try to include local scenes on the wall and include store employees in the art work.



The Butterfly House



Monarch Fire District Station 4



Someone needs to erase the two horses in front of city hall.



I hope these two are toasting a safe landing and not getting a few belts in before taking off. I think the FAA and T&C alderwoman Linda Rallo would have some problems with that.





The only painting from outside of Chesterfield appears to be the dairy farm. I'm not sure which Holstein is producing orange juice. The painting (right) in front of Baxter Pointe Villas is the only painting not done by Anna Aschenbach. This one was done by local college student Devon Baker who works just part of his shifts in the art studio.

The Des Peres Store has to go outside the city limits: Other than the dairy scene, all the painting in the Chesterfield Trader Joe's are depicting local scenes. That is not the case at the Des Peres Trader Joe's where only one painting with a scene that goes from the Arch to Jefferson City includes the Des Peres store and the Rec Center.

When I took the first photo in the Des Peres store an employee behind the sample counter warned me if the store management saw me taking photos of the wall art they would make me stop for "copyright" reasons. I found this odd since the store was a public business with government issued business and liquor licenses. I explained I was doing a story resulting from the Chesterfield Trader Joe's getting an award for their wall art. The employee then told me he was the architect for the Chesterfield City Hall. He was not the architect of record, Art Bond who still works at his architectural firm.



Queeny Park which is close to Des Peres

Farm fields and Meramec Caverns which are not close to Des Peres.



Museum of Transport



All Kirkwood scenes



Left to right the MO Capital, cows, Des Peres, the zoo and downtown St. Louis.

MEDIA WATCH: LOCATION...LOCATION... LOCATION...Moving a story south or to the West: On Sunday November 30 the online edition of the Post-Dispatch sent out a email Breaking News alert to subscribers:

Breaking News by STLtoday.com STL teens allegedly beat Fla. driver to death with hammers

For several hours the online story claimed the victim was from Florida. The victim actually lived in the 4200 block of Miami Street in South St. Louis.

The next day on Channel 2 another new reporter, Lisa Hart, while standing in front of the MoDOT Traffic Management Center in Town and Country claimed to be in Chesterfield. If Channel 2 reporters inaccurately report where they are standing how and why should viewers believe anything else they say? Lisa just arrived in St. Louis from Billings, Montana.



Lisa Hart is telling St. Louisans that this building is has mysteriously moved 1/2 mile to the west.

I sent an email to KTVI reminding them of this fact and got a very funny one returned to me a couple of hours later.

From: John Hoffmann [<mailto:donotreply@wordpress.com>]
Sent: Monday, December 01, 2014 11:13 AM
To: KTVINEWS; fox2now@gmail.com; ktvipubfile@gmail.com
Subject: News Tip

Name: John Hoffmann

Email: johnhoffmann@charter.net

Comment: Did Lisa Hart miss the big story today? In the ice did the MoDOT Traffic Management Center slide 1/2 mile to the west and move from Town and Country into the City of Chesterfield?

The MoDOT Traffic Management Center and the Regional HQ are both in Town and Country and your reporters week after week claim it is is Chesterfield. If you don't know where you are, why should I believe anything else you report?

The response:

From: Lamie, Joe [mailto:Joe.Lamie@tvstl.com]
Sent: Monday, December 1, 2014 11:28 AM
To: johnhoffmann@charter.net
Subject: The TIC

Hi John

We have no knowledge of a major land mass slide this morning in West County. We also apparently have no knowledge of how to read a map book. The TIC is in Town and Country. Always has been. I've sent a note to the newscasts producers to remind them of this simple fact.

Thanks for your email.

FOOD: GO FOR THE FRIES AND ONION RINGS...NOT THE CHEESE STEAK OR BURGERS: The two Cheeburger-Cheeburger restaurants located in Des Peres on Manchester and at the Chesterfield Mall next to American Girl are franchises, but they may as well be considered local joints. They are owned by the members of the same family with a nephew running the Chesterfield outlet and the uncle in charge of the Des Peres location.

The first time I went to a Cheeburger...Cheeburger it was shortly after the Des Peres store opened. I ordered a cheeseburger "medium" with lettuce, tomato, onion and mayo. When the burger arrived and after the first bite, I found the ground beef in the middle of the seared top and bottom of the patty was raw. I showed it to the manager (owner) and he proclaimed that it was cooked perfectly. I then took the prongs of my fork and removed all the uncooked beef placing it in a pile on my plate. He reluctantly agreed to get me another burger. Normally this would be enough to keep me from coming back but the fresh made onion rings and fries were so good I kept coming back and ordered the burgers "medium well done."

Former Patch.com editor Jean Whitney and I went to the Chesterfield location on Veterans Day for lunch. When we entered there was a sign on the door advertising the cheese steak for \$7.99.



Jean ordered a cheeseburger with provolone cheese and a bunch of toppings including cole slaw for \$5.69. We shared a medium basket of onion rings and French fries. (Small \$2.99; med \$4.89 and large \$5.89).

I then quizzed the manager owner over how they made a Philly Cheesesteak. He said the onions were chopped up and on the grill. He volunteered that they did not pour Cheese Whiz on it like in Philadelphia and mix it all together but he said the cheese was melted on it. I decided to try the cheese steak at \$7.99. It was a mistake.

The onions were not chopped up with the meat as advertised. I pointed this out to the manager as a whole round onion dangled between my teeth. The manager replied that the cook "usually does chop it up, but I guess he didn't this time."

Don't buy a cheese steak at Cheeburger...Cheeburger. The one at Tucker's is much better and \$2.00 cheaper. Of course this got me to wondering if I could make a cheese steak better than the one I just had. A week later I went to Dierberg's bought a large yellow onion for \$1.50 and a half pound of the most expensive sliced roast beef sirloin (\$6).

Using a cast iron skillet I first sautéed the onion slices in some butter. I then added chopped up slices of roast beef. I have to admit that I avoided the Cheese Wiz and went with slices of Borden's American cheese, since it has much more milk content than Kraft and Borden is now owned by Missouri Dairy farmers. I then lightly grilled the bread.

I can do four cheese steaks for about \$2 a piece and they are much better than the one sold for \$7.99 and almost as good as the one at Tuckers.



So now back to Cheeburger...Cheeburger. Jean's burger arrived and the first thing was that the bun was bigger than the burger. Bad marketing! Get a smaller bun, but create the illusion that the bun can barely hold the burger. The burger was not cooked to medium, but had raw meat in the middle. Some things never change...the manager claimed it was perfectly cooked. I thought local health department were banning rare burgers.



Jean's comment on the raw burger was that the burger had little taste, but all the toppings she ordered tasted great.

However our trip was not wasted. The onion rings dipped in batter to order and the fries cut fresh from potatoes that day were fantastic! They are the reason to make a trip to Cheeburger...Cheeburger! I have to confess I have been known to go to the Des Peres location and just order a small serving of the onion rings and fries.



HERE IS WHY YOU GO TO CHEEBURGER...CHEEBURGER

THIS IS AN IMPORTANT AUDIO TAPE FROM FERGUSON...Please listen.

<http://www.yourepeat.com/watch/?v=S1sABwyLGw4>

Well, okay it is from 1960 and it is also from jazz band leader Maynard Ferguson. It is his famous Christmas medley. Be sure to have the sound up on your computer.

MUSIC: Swinging a nutcracker: Battle of the Bands Christmas Style

Here are some clips from a 2001 PBS Live from the Lincoln Center program that featured the former conductor of the St. Louis Symphony Leonard Slatkin with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra and Wynton Marsalis with the New York Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra doing opposing pieces of Tchaikovsky's "Overture Miniature" followed by Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn's "Overture." Then just sit back ND ENJOY while there is a battle of the orchestras for the rest of the Nutcracker Suite.

(Side Note: Back in 1970 Leonard was the assistant conductor of the SLSO and besides being in high school I was a disc jockey at a radio station in Gaslight Square where Leonard also had a program. Christmas eve of 1970 my shift was over at 2 am and Leonard was at the radio station and we went out to find something to eat. In 1970 7-11s actually closed at 11 pm. All

stores, restaurants and gas stations were closed on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. The only places open on Christmas Day were the movie theaters at 6 o'clock. We eventually found a steak and eggs diner on Lindell about three blocks east of the Cathedral. But after midnight mass they were out of over half of their menu. I don't remember what we ended up eating...but I'll never forget spending Christmas Eve with a guy who ended up as the conductor of the St. Louis Symphony, National Symphony, the conductor of BBC Symphony and the Detroit Symphony.)



Wynton Marsalis and Leonard Slatkin at the Hollywood 17 years before the Nutcracker Battle of the Bands.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9vhdlulxbc&index=7&list=PL6F1AC55B2AEB2217>
Here is a five minute black & white film piece featuring the Nutcracker overture with Columbia Records president Goddard Lieberson interviewing Duke Ellington about his LP album of the Nutcracker.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJHHAxvx878>





RAT PARK MONDAY CHRISTMAS EDITION: Dean Christopher will be two days past his Saturday sold out Christmas Show performance when the fun begins at the One-19 North restaurant at 119 N. Kirkwood Road on Monday December 15 at 7:30. This should be a loosey-goosey night as Jim Manley will be performing on trumpet two days after his four Christmas shows on Friday and Saturday nights at Jazz at the Bistro. Chris Swan will be on keyboards and I will be surprised if a drummer and some other musicians are not sitting in by the end of the night.

CHRISTMAS AT THE BISTRO: It is a Very Manley Christmas. It is also a chance to go to the remodeled Bistro at a reasonable price on Friday December 12 and Saturday December 13 at 7:30 and 9:30 and hear some Christmas music by Manley's Mad Brass and Rhythm group. The first floor seating for Saturday night's first set is sold out, but there is balcony seating and first floor seating for the second set.



Manley has 436 photos on his facebook page...and not one of him wearing a Santa Hat, but two of his dog, Sparky in Christmas headgear...and one full photo of Mad Brass and Rhythm group.

AIR FORCE BAND OF MID-AMERICA: We attended the Sunday concert of the USAF Band of Mid America at the Scottish Rite on Sunday. Overall the flow of the two set

program had improved over the last few years, but we missed the band vocalist Sgt. Keisha Gwinn, who is still listed as the female vocalist with the band but was missing on Sunday.

Sgt. Keisha Gwinn



As usual things in the second set got a little looser, including not only Santa hats, but antlers and eyewear by the band members. A delayed broadcast of the concert will be on KETC Channel 9 on Monday December 22 at 7pm



CHRISTMAS HOUSE IS BACK IN WEBSTER GROVES: The very uniquely decorated home on West Jackson Ave located two doors from W. Lockwood Avenue is back again this year. No dancing Santa, no special effects or music...but still worth taking a look at if you are in the area this Christmas season. Here are three angles of the house we took on December 7th.



CARTOONS:

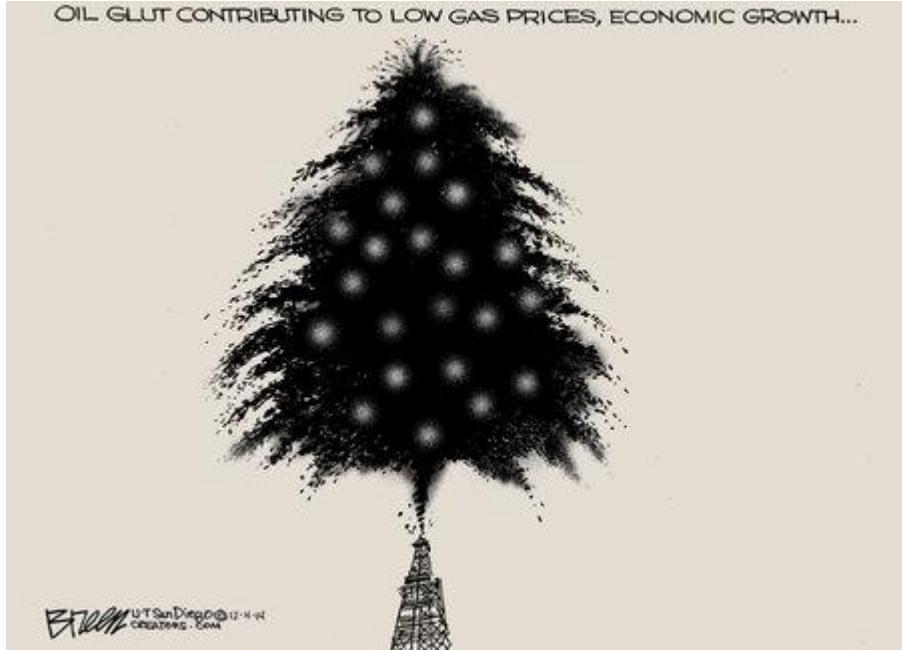
BREVITY

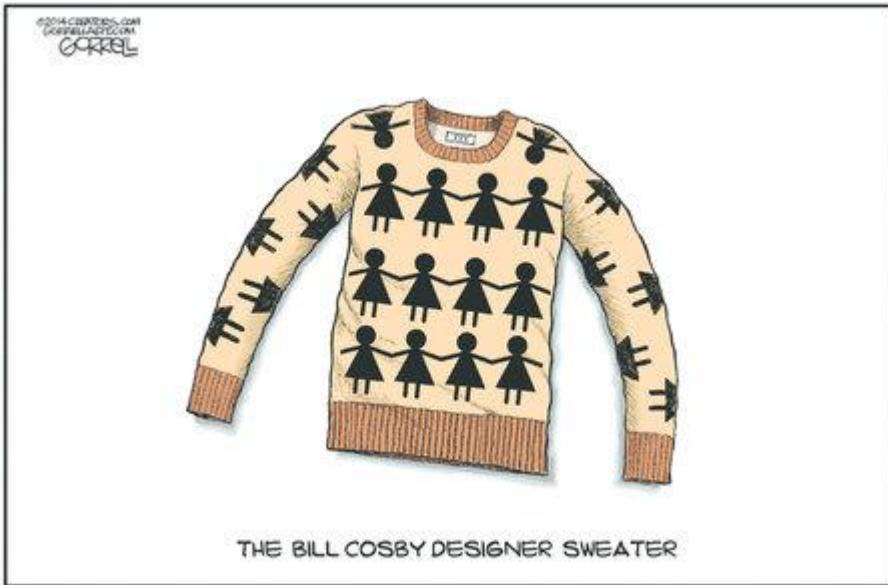
BY DAN THOMPSON





OIL GLUT CONTRIBUTING TO LOW GAS PRICES, ECONOMIC GROWTH...





FARRELL © 2014 THE WASHINGTON DAILY NEWS



DRIVING THE GETAWAY CAR

www.lmstudios.com/cartoons

