

No Standing News

Since we have no standing, we stand with those left standing

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Serving the Outlaw City of Missouri

Celebrating the Constitution with Flag-flyin,' Horn-honkin' and Ear-candle Therapy

Mayor Joe "Sit-down-and-shut-up" **Morgan**, on declaring Constitution Week in Rolla, said it is about: "*Awareness. The people of Rolla should read the Constitution in order to gain understanding of what the laws provide for us, and of the freedoms we have.*" Joe and the DAR want us to celebrate the constitution by "flag-flyin' and horn-honkin'" on September 23rd. In addition to "flag-flyin' and horn-honkin,' the DAR will hand out bookmarks to school children. Bookmarks? Well a bookmark will certainly give schoolchildren a deep and penetrating understanding of the most important document in our country. Can't the Daughters of the American Revolution come up with something better than bookmarks and horn-honkin'?

The idea of Mayor Joe lecturing others to read the constitution proves that satire is alive and well in City Hall. This is the same Joe Morgan, who recently presided over an unconstitutional dog trial without having the slightest understanding that he was violating the constitution he recommends we all read.

Unconstitutional Dog Trials replaced by Unconstitutional Dog Committee. The Mayor and council have solved the problem of holding unconstitutional tribunals for dogs by changing the ordinance. They've "fixed" the problem by shuffling the decision off to a committee that also doesn't have the power to enforce the ordinance. Instead of the council denying owners of a dangerous dog constitutional due process they now have a committee that will deny them due process.

This is not just about dogs; it's about the way all problems are solved in Rolla. Without taking the time to find out if what they're doing or proposing to do is constitutional, legal - or even logical, someone thinks up these knee-jerk "solutions" and they just blunder away. When told they've made another legal gaffe they don't care find out where they went wrong the solution, as in this case, is to have somebody else do it wrong for them. This is progress? Teaching cannibals to use knives and forks is progress but it doesn't address the problem.

No one who has a dangerous dog has to do anything the council or their new Dog Committee says they have to do. No one with a vicious dog has to show up at their Dog Committee meeting because they, like the council, have no power to make anyone obey their orders. The mayor and council still don't understand that they can't enforce their "dangerous dog" ordinance because the constitution doesn't give the council or their Dog Committee the power to put someone in jail or fine them for not complying with the

orange collar, fencing and \$100,000 insurance policy requirements. Only the court has the power to use jail and/or fines to force compliance. This craving the council has for being both the second and third branches of government has its roots in the frustration certain council members have with their city court system, a problem they could solve if they understood how the court system is supposed to work and how the council should work. So no one is being protected from bad dogs in Rolla but then no one is protected from bad government in Rolla either.

But there is something else this compounding mismanagement of the animal control ordinance says about the city council - they obviously don't trust their own policemen to do their jobs. Why shouldn't the dog catcher or any other cop be able to determine that a dog is dangerous, write out the summons and send people to court to argue about it? If cops can't be trusted to decide if a dog is dangerous then their judgment must be suspect in everything else they do. If that is the case, will they create a Traffic Ticket Committee to second guess cops when they give out speeding tickets?

The DAR shouldn't be handing out bookmarks and advocating "flag-flyin' and horn-honkin' to celebrate Constitution Week, they should be attending city council meetings to see first hand how dead the Constitution is in our flag-flyin' horn-honkin' Ozark town.

The TIF Zombie. On September 7th, Kaplan Company's **David Wright** finally came back and told the council he wanted a 90-day extension because he couldn't come through on his promise to find a "big box" retailer who could generate enough *new* spending and *new* taxes to pay off their colossal \$15,000,000 TIF debt. Kaplan Co. couldn't come through on their big promises - what a surprise.

After playing the council for suckers and lying about all the "big box" retailers he said had right in his pocket, Wright had the arrogance to order the council into closed session saying that he would only explain why "retailers are not finding this project attractive" if he could do it in secret. Wright arrogantly declared that, "It's not in anyone's best interest to share this in the public venue." Mr. Slick, who has totally snowed the council since this began, had the nerve to dictate to the ninny's who are supposed to represent *us* what's in *our* best interests. The council obediently went behind closed doors, in their usual illegal fashion, to hear his lame excuses thus sparing themselves the sniggering from the audience that would have accompanied reading the excuses in public.

Wright's letter and the list are on the NSN web site. Wright says it's the city's fault, it's the property owners fault but nothing is his fault. Wright points out, *"To date and despite active solicitation and previous indication of interest, a major retailer with sufficient sales potential to support the TIF has not been secured."* Yeah, that's a problem all right. Of the 27 retail corporations Wright claims to have contacted 22 were "not interested." Many either didn't return his phone calls or said the Rolla market was too small or they weren't interested in locating in a "third tier market." Wright was so desperate he even contacted Kroger's and asked if they wanted to relocate from one intersection to the next. How is moving Kroger's down the street a few blocks going to generate new retail sales taxes for city hall to pay off \$15 million in TIF debt?

The reason Morgan, Butz and the council didn't want the public to see why these companies aren't interested in locating here is because it blows up one of their favorite fictions, that Rolla is ripe for the big time; just one more big tax gamble, one more tax giveaway, one more project like TIF and they will grab the big brass ring. Like any gambling addict, it's always the next roll of the dice that will win back all their losses. Hitting the jackpot is the only thing that will justify the years of wasted tax and bond money that should have been spent on Rolla's crumbling infrastructure. Read the responses; not only is it very clear we're not going to win the TIF jackpot, but we aren't even close to the casino.

The TIF zombie walks again... Then at the September 20th council meeting the council voted to dump Kaplan Co. as their TIF developer, take the troublesome four acres out of the project and send out RFP's for a new TIF developer – another Dog Committee 'cure.' By terminating the developer and taking four acres out of the TIF project they have made a "substantial" change in the TIF Plan. The TIF law says that when they do that they have to recall the other TIF commissioners (whose taxes they plan to steal) and have

new public hearings on the new, reduced TIF Zone, the new or revised plan and the new contract they will have to sign with the new developer. Butz and Morgan probably think they can just get some developer to take Kaplan's plan and put his name on it and pretend there is no "substantial change" so no need to go through the process again. That's not true but that's what they will try to sell the council.

Quiz: What do John Butz and Karl have in common?

Quote: *"The city has a right and an obligation to see that the property at that busy intersection is developed. It's valuable not because Warren Dean owns it. It's valuable because it's at the corner of 63 and 72," Butz said. The taxpayers have invested in those highways and should have a right to expect that the land next to those highways will be developed to obtain a return in taxes."* **John Butz** desperately trying to justify the TIF debacle in the RDN, September 7, 2004.

Quote: *"The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie... Of course, in the beginning, this cannot be effected except by means of despotic inroads on the rights of property."* **Karl Marx**, the *Communist Manifesto*, 1848.

Oh...gee, there is no difference is there? We'd like John Butz to show, in the Missouri Constitution or state law, where it says the people have a right to use "despotic" methods (TIF) to take private property *because they paid taxes to build roads*. John, if you're going to rip off people with TIF just do it, don't try to dress it up with bogus "rights of the taxpayers who paid for the roads" defense to make it sound legitimate. We pay taxes to have roads so we can have roads, period. Road taxes have nothing to do with TIF.

The first of Karl's ten communist principles was *"the abolition of private property and the application of all rent to public purpose,"* ... a description of TIF 156 years before its time. Karl would be so proud.

RDN spikes story about multiple School Board embarrassments

Rolla School Board offers religious classes. Is your Chakra blocked? Is your physical or emotional health unbalanced? Are you feeling disharmonious and unable to attune your energy? Perhaps you need Raindrop Therapy, Ear Candle Therapy or perhaps you need to stick a zucchini up your nose. All these experiences and more can be yours if you enroll in one of the courses at RTI where a Reiki Master will initiate you into the mysteries of this Japanese version of the Buddhist religion (or whatever). But that is not all of the delights offered by our school district in their Adult/Community Education program. You can also, "Experience the Joy of Visualization," learn Boot Scootin,' the Mambo and the Waltz. You can learn to interpret your dreams and be "healed" by the hands of a Reiki practitioner or learn to make a Sock Monkey.

All this sounds like a great idea for those with a constipated Chakra or desperate crafters who've lost their

Sock Monkey pattern, but they sound like things that should be happening at the Recreation Center - maybe - not in a public school. There is a lodge somewhere between Rolla and Salem where those who are into learning about "Medicine Tools (drumming, rattles, pendulums, etheric energy) Reiki, and lessons of the Grandfathers (stone people)" and so forth can sign up with **Sandy LittleLizzard** (I swear we did not make that up) and rattle, drum and channel away to their hearts content. They're having a "Spirit Retreat" in October where there will be daily meditations, drumming, healing baths and gazing at Grandmother Moon. Just the ticket for those who need hot candle wax dripped in their ears.

This would only be funny if our school board and **RTI Director Janese Martin** were not spending **\$84,852** of our K-12 public education money teaching dream interpretation while they're whining about "crisis" budgets,

firing teachers and staff and plotting how to make an old 'temporary' 69¢ tax into a permanent levy. But *they are* spending **\$84,852** on a director and a secretary and benefits, travel, advertising and supplies to produce these nutty courses. Should they be spending our K-12 tax money to teach adults the 'Lessons of the Stone People' when our children haven't mastered the lessons of American history and as a result their SAT scores have dropped for the third year in a row?

We suggest the members of the Rolla School Board stick green beans in their ears and 'attune' their auras to the Universal *Taxpaying* Force while they rethink this wacky curriculum and their spending priorities. But there's another reason why this is dangerous...

Do we want religious wars in our schools? No we don't. For those who think organized, institutional prayer solves all problems we suggest they start with organizing prayer in prisons and government offices first and see if it improves their morals before we engage in the acrimonious debate and conflict that results when classrooms become political/religious battlegrounds. So far, due to either public indifference (most likely) or common sense, (least likely) we have mostly avoided falling into this disruptive trap but the Rolla School Board seems to be playing with fire these days. The district does have a policy that in a fuzzy way establishes the policy of religious neutrality. They've broken this policy at will until someone recently protested prayers at the Athletic Banquet. To be religiously neutral means they won't mess with religion either way but the board and their administrators obviously don't 'get' the meaning of 'neutrality.'

At the school board meeting on Thursday, September 23rd a lawyer, **Tom Mickes**, briefed the board and all the school principals on the three most litigious subjects for public schools, the Sunshine Law, student discipline and searches and religion. The board needs help in all these areas because they break the Sunshine Law at every meeting, their student discipline is a mess and as they've proved with their Adult Ed courses at the RTI they clearly don't get the religion thing. Before Mickes began his instruction, **Angela Park** addressed the board to inform them that they were advertising and promoting six classes at the RTI that involved, not the objective academic study of Eastern religious practices, but the actual religious practice complete with certificates for completion after some peculiar initiation ceremonies. These classes are advertised by the school as "adult education" but the constitution and the law make no such distinction. School sponsorship of religion is school sponsorship of religion even if our parochial board members and administrators are ignorant of what kind of religion it is, that it is happening right under their noses and that they are spending public funds to promote it. Did the board thank Mrs. Park for pointing this out to them before someone gets upset and files another lawsuit? No, they said nothing at all in response. Our public school board does not encourage people to speak to them; they are at a loss as to how to communicate with people unless the speaker is reciting an Ode to the Board and giving them gift baskets.

Then Mickes launched his power point and, while carefully avoiding discussing the very relevant examples Mrs. Park had raised, explained to the board why their annual Baccalaureate ceremony was in violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. The Board decided on the spot that they could no longer sponsor the Baccalaureate Sermon for Rolla graduates. More accurately, Annie Bass just preemptively decided there wouldn't be one after Mickes said that was religious sponsorship; the board never did vote to cancel it. The board (actually just Annie) cautioned Principal Roger Berkbuegler that if there was a Baccalaureate he could not have any input including the selection of the program, speakers, etc., could not even photo-copy the program guide, and would have to charge the same amount they charge other community groups for use of school facilities. Why this religious issue was a revelation to Bass and Rapiere is a mystery. They've both been on the school board through the 90's when most of the Supreme Court decisions on Establishment and Free Exercise were slugged out. All that time the school has been having Baccalaureate services as if the decisions applied to people on some other planet.

If the Baccalaureate Service continues, it will be totally up to parents and the religious community of Rolla to organize, sponsor and pay for it. Shouldn't be a problem; after all booster parents sponsor school sporting events and raise a lot of money for them. It will be interesting to see if they're as enthusiastic about giving graduates a religious send off as they are about the football kick-off.

And what did the board (actually Annie) decide to do about the classes they are 'sponsoring' at the vocational school that offer instruction in "exploring your past lives", "looking into the future", and unlocking your secret power to heal yourself and others? Why nothing of course. It appears that the current position of the Rolla Board of Education is that a Baccalaureate service is government sponsorship of religious activity and thus prohibited but classes to help you reincarnate your past lives, foretell the future and practice spiritual healing are not.

This is what happens when committees of administrators are turned loose to plunder a \$51 million school budget to satisfy their personal whims and strange religious proclivities without oversight from the school board. This is what happens when the board votes on the mystery budget ten seconds after it's put in front of them but don't have a clue that someone is using the money to teach Eastern religious mysticism on public property. The members of the board have no excuse for their ignorance of the religion issue – it's been established in Supreme Court rulings for years. Why are we paying over \$1 million dollars a year in salaries to administrators who only discovered last Thursday that they can't have Baccalaureate services but meanwhile are signing up people to be initiated into a Reiki wingding right next to their offices?

So in the Baccalaureate vs. Reiki bout, Reiki won and the constitution lost. Still, it was a more fitting combat during Constitution Week than a bookmark and horn honkin,' pity that the DAR never goes to school board meetings either.

No news coverage doesn't improve bad MAP scores. In case you're searching your memory for a news report of this meeting, there wasn't one. Bill Morrison was there but obligingly didn't report on any of the issues about the Sunshine violations or the religion issues. He also didn't cover the two important reports that followed. The first was another report on the poor MAP performance. MAP scores are okay – just okay - until students reach Jr Hi where their performance drops. When they move on and take the MAP test in high school the teachers there have to catch them up with what they didn't get in Jr Hi and do the high school preparation for MAP as well - the result is slightly better (but still mediocre) high school MAP scores. In 7 out of 14 assessments of three grade levels, over 70% of the students were only "nearing proficient" or worse. This, in combination with the fact that the SAT scores have been

declining for three years seems to be pointing out the blindingly obvious; that this is not Blue Ribbon or Gold Star performance and at the very least the Jr. Hi needs a shake-up from the top down. Instead they came up with a Dog Committee solution. Since the current method of "teaching to the MAP test" isn't working they will double the amount of time they spend teaching to the test. This will cut down even more on the time available for something that used to be called "education." If there's no time for the school to teach your kids about the American Revolution you can always check out the Mel Gibson movie.

The second report was they spent \$112,000 last fiscal year to send teachers to conferences for "professional development." Many of the conferences had something to do with subverting education to get better MAP scores. It obviously didn't work; so this year they will spend \$123,000 on it.

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