

No Standing News

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

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Hail to “The Chief”

By Lois Ann Marler

That which one does for himself dies with him. That which one does for others lives on and is his monument.”

That quote, spoken by Missouri Governor Forrest Donnell at the funeral of Henry Andrew Buehler, begins my story, *Hail to “The Chief”*: A Special Tribute to Dr. Henry Andrew Buehler.

This has been a full-circle experience for me. I became actively involved in local politics because of Buehler Park. While investigating many other city-instigated shenanigans, the story of Rolla’s hidden hero, Henry Buehler, eluded me. I began researching “The Chief,” former state geologist and local benefactor, this summer after receiving a tip about a 1939 newspaper article on him. That article was the catalyst for a summer’s worth of research and resulted in *Hail to “The Chief,”* a mere sampling of the life and works of Buehler.

This gentleman from Missouri deserves much more than a 24-page booklet; he deserves more than a

memorial park. What Henry Buehler did for this community, the state and the nation deserves remembering, retelling and revitalizing. To forget a man revered as a “mighty oak in life’s forest” would be a tragic mistake. It’s time we welcome The Chief back to Rolla.

The writing of *Hail to “The Chief”* coincided with the Rolla City Council seeking bids (again) for the sale of Buehler’s memorial park. Mayor Joe Morgan has made it Priority One to sell Buehler’s memorial, but has failed every attempt. This latest attempt, however, reeks of collusion. The council voted at the October 1, 2001, meeting to reject all the proposals received, but also voted to hide the identity of all the bidders.

One month before opening the bids on Buehler’s memorial park, I presented the Rolla City Council with copies of *Hail to “The Chief.”* (In case you subscribe to the Rolla Daily News and wonder why you didn’t read about this, it was blacked out – like numerous other newsworthy events.)

Though I had notified the city that I would be making a special presentation and was on the agenda,

the mayor still tried to “rough” me up just prior to the meeting. He wanted to know what I planned to say to the council and insisted that I extract “that history stuff” from my presentation. Mayor Morgan, former president of the Rolla Board of Education, should be more open minded toward “history stuff.” It came as no surprise to me, however, that he would have such an attitude.

During the presentation, I made three recommendations. The first was for the city to open dialogue with the Chamber of Commerce on marketing Chief Buehler as a tourist icon. Buehler himself was a promoter of tourism. Ironically, he also was a founding member of the Rolla Chamber of Commerce...the same organization that campaigned to sell Buehler’s memorial park! We need to take advantage of a superb opportunity to enrich the tourism experience in Rolla by exploring what the charisma and appeal of Buehler can do for the community posthumously.

Second, I recommended that the city council re-establish its statutory park board. In 1981, the city council abolished the park board and created the Parks and Recreation Department. That very night, the council also voted to hire Ken Kwantes as director of the new department. The resulting lack of accountability has contributed to our parks (and creeks) being used as dumps, play equipment being removed and not replaced, excessive fees for pavilion and ballfield use, and general neglect. Decisions on the park system are left to the discretion of Kwantes, with NO influence from the general public. Attorney General Opinion 181-95 states that once a park board is established, it must remain even if no funds are collected for parks; many on the council know this, but they want to remain in control of all their “dispensable assets” they declared “for sale” last year.

Last, I strongly urged the council to consider renaming the portion of Highway 72 within the city limits after Buehler. When you read *Hail to “The Chief,”* you will discover why that suggestion is fitting. Development of Highway 72 in the 1930s has an interesting tie to Buehler Park. While driving down “Buehler Boulevard,” don’t forget to visit his very unique grave, just a couple of blocks south of Highway 72 off Elm Street in the Rolla Cemetery.

And so the saga continues. When you read *Hail to “The Chief,”* you will see Buehler the undying public servant in diametric contrast with the “public servants” of today. Through it all, Buehler’s hallmark of humility comes shining through. His legacy will endure, and history will remember The Chief as a cornerstone of our community.

Please read *Hail to “The Chief”* to your children. Share with them the spirit of The Chief, a man I have come to love dearly. More than anything, teach them how to honor a hero.

Hail to “The Chief” is only a sample of the whole story I intend to write. The 24-page booklet is now available on the N S N web site : <http://www.rollanet.org/~rwnash/Buehler/Hail to The Chief.PDF> in PDF. *Hail to “The Chief”* booklets are available at the Rolla Public Library or Mail Boxes Etc. while supplies last. If you decide to print *Hail to “The Chief”* on an ink jet printer, it may take a while due to the pictures and graphics.

“In our every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations.” -from the *Great Law of the Iroquois Confederacy*

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