

“IF WE CANNOT RECONCILE ALL OPINIONS, LET US ENDEAVOR TO UNITE ALL HEARTS.”

NEW-HARMONY, (IND.) March 1, 2018

**HARMONY WAY BRIDGE  
COMMITTEE UPDATE!**

*by: Dan Barton, Publisher*

A new website has been set up by the Harmony Way Bridge Committee. It is very helpful in understanding what this committee is doing and what it has planned. The web site is, [www.harmonywaybridgeproject.com](http://www.harmonywaybridgeproject.com).

The Bridge Committee has been doing a lot of work in a very short time. Lora Arneberg, who heads the Committee, has been busy successfully soliciting letters of support from both the Posey County Commission and The Town Council of New Harmony. She paid both of these governmental organizations a visit in February and made an appeal to them, requesting that they provide letters of support for the Bridge Authority legislation that was going to be introduced to the State Legislature in Indianapolis. The letters were to be directed to State Representatives Wendy McNamara and Jim Tomes. She confirmed that both of these letters were received before she made her trip to Indianapolis in February 21st.

Ms. Arneberg went to Indianapolis to meet with Representative McNamara who assisted her in having House Bill 269 introduced for passage of the Bridge Authority amendment to that Transportation bill. The idea is to establish a specific State Authority for the Harmony Way Bridge and thereby remove it's dependency on the old White County Bridge Commission. The Bridge Commission has outlived it's usefulness. It has been without Bridge Commissioner replacements for some years now. The old Commission does not function efficiently under the current Federal guidelines and needs to be replaced with this more efficient

Bridge Authority. If you want detailed information on exactly what the Bridge Committee has been doing read the Bridge Committee website for a guide. It will inform you of all the advantages the Bridge Authority will provide in the management of the Harmony Way Bridge. Oh! And you really have to see the Drone Scan of the Bridge on their website. Mesmerizing! It will draw you right in to the site.

I was advised by Council President Alvin Blaylock that the new Bridge Authority will be made up of five members; three chosen by Indiana's Governor, no more than two of whom can be of the same political party; one chosen by the county executive of Posey County, Jim Alsop; and one member chosen by the town executive of New Harmony, Alvin Blaylock. An appointment to the bridge authority shall be for a term of four years.

Where this is all going and where it will end up, it's too early to tell, but this Bridge Committee seems well organized and off to a good start. As it moves along the New Harmony Gazette will keep you up to date.

**IS HARMONY SCHOOL  
AND PROPERTY IN  
JEOPARDY AGAIN?**

*by: Dan Barton, Publisher*

Back when the New Harmony School closed, the Town Council President at that time, David Campbell, said in a local newspaper interview, that it had been assessed for \$7 million dollars. Now, just seven years later, The New Harmony Town Council is considering the option of tearing down the school and turning the property into a cornfield. According to the current Town Council President, Alvin Blaylock, the land could be rented for about \$1860 per year, maybe a little more, he said. I calculate

that, without imputed interest, it would take around 4,000 years to break even on that \$7 million dollar assessment quoted by Campbell.

I'm not trying to put a guilt trip on Alvin Blaylock or the present members of the New Harmony Town Council. It's not easy to solve what many see as the intractable dilemma of an unwanted 55,000 square foot public building and 30 acres of land. The Council seems to be looking for a solution and considering more than one option. If the problem is not managed properly and in a practical manner it could end up being a money pit. Small towns like New Harmony cannot afford a problem like that.

Recently at the February 20, 2018 Town Council public meeting all five members of the Town Council voted unanimously to seek bids for the demolition of the building, the removal of the concrete pad that it sits on, and the blacktop parking areas.

For the past three years, The Working Men's Institute here in New Harmony was trying to develop a plan to use the building and grounds for an alternative type of educational training and town social center. They eventually decided to give up and abandon the project. I would like to say that the WMI turned the facility back to the Town of New Harmony, but that would be inaccurate. The Town never ceased owning the facility for those three years. The Working Men's Institute never took title to the property.

What could the two Town Councils that administered our town during that three year period have done to save this property from the wrecking ball and turn it into a profitable venture for New Harmony? Maybe one thing they could have done, since they never ceased owning it, was to have advertised it for sale Nationwide. According to Council President Blaylock, the previous Council sent out only 191 Requests for Proposals (RFPs) back in 2015. That's not many in today's world. This little newspaper, The New-Harmony Gazette, sometimes reaches up to 500 people in a month.

The thing is, we don't even know if these RFP's were all sent out or not. According to

Blaylock there is no record of where they were sent or to whom. Councilman Blaylock said to me several days after the February Council meeting that he has been unable to locate that list of Request For Proposal's that were sent out in 2015. So, there doesn't appear to be a record that any of them were ever sent out, other than the one that was responded to, which was from The Working Men's Institute. Could it be that someone may have forgotten to mail them?

Councilman Blaylock also said that one of the several options at which the council has been looking is exactly what it would cost to do the demolition. He indicated at the February meeting that he had heard the cost would be anywhere from \$300,000 dollars to \$400,000 dollars, from a 2014 Town Council estimate, but that nobody can really prove it. "There's no detail," he said, "that I can find anywhere about what it entailed." Mr. Blaylock said to me that if there were demolition estimate records that they would be very detailed and would indicate each phase of the demolition and it's costs. They would not simply state \$300, \$350 or \$400 thousand dollars as a total cost. He says that he has a form that he would like to use to seek a bid for the demolition of the school and it's paved property. Blaylock says that his bid package would include the costs to take down the building and then stop. Then what it would cost to take up the concrete pad that the school sits on, and stop again. Those would be phases number one and two.

A few days after the February Town Council session I happened to run into former Councilwoman Karen Walker. Her name appeared in the 2014 Council minutes referencing her as the Council person who had released the \$400,000 dollar demolition estimate. I asked her if she knew where the written estimate was filed and she said that there never was a written estimate. It was verbal, she said. From a company in Evansville.

Council President Blaylock said during the Council meeting that there would be phase number three - where they would remove the parking blacktop on the southeast parking area and then phase number four - where they would give cost estimates on removing the parking blacktop on the northwest parking area. He finished by saying, "This does not mean that we will be demolishing the building, but it will give us an exact amount of what it is going to cost and what it entails."

Blaylock said that there were other

options that he had considered and that he pointed out. He said that he had recently talked with a contractor, who was doing a conversion of an abandoned Catholic Grade School on St. Joseph Avenue in Evansville, into an apartment complex. Mr. Blaylock wanted to see if the contractor might be interested in doing a similar project at the New Harmony School. The contractor looked at the Harmony School, Blaylock said, and that he declined because he thought the building was too large and the market too weak in New Harmony to bring people in to rent the apartments.

The third idea proposed by Council President Blaylock was that they may seek someone to sell the property. No one asked, but at this juncture I would like to weigh in on that item. It would seem to me to be a good idea to put it on the national market and let the advertisements run for a year. If the Town Council rushes in now and destroys the property, it will be destroying an extremely valuable town asset that cannot ever be replaced.

By repairing the HVAC and running it for one year at the school, there is a fair opportunity for a company somewhere in this vast nation to utilize this building and the parking for it's business. That would generate income for our town and possibly put the property on the County tax rolls. We need to give this a fair chance. It should have been ongoing for the past seven years but was an idea that was neglected. There was nothing stopping the last three Town Councils from pursuing the idea of selling the school. They owned the property! If there was an impediment, I'd like to hear what it was. I'm sure you would too. By not initiating a concerted attempt to sell the school and its property our town may have experienced an unnecessary loss of income.

Mr. Blaylock said in the last public meeting that, "I would like to take the Soccer Field, the Softball Field and the area north and east of the Softball Field and turn it into agricultural farm land. Not spend money mowing. It costs about \$28 per hour to mow grass. We can turn it into agricultural farm ground. We would not be getting rich but we could be receiving a little bit of income." "By turning it into agricultural farmland," he said, "if we needed the property back for development or whatever, we could take it from agriculture right back to development."

Councilman Blaylock pointed out that the Baseball Field will stay for now. He said, "You'd need a contractor with a

cherry picker to get that done. If that were ever decided you'd need future further discussions." Finally he said, "The Baseball Field will stay. The Softball field is being removed."

A vote to obtain a cost estimate from an unidentified company interviewed by Council President Blaylock to give the Council estimates for the cost of, "getting the building taken down" was passed by all five members unanimously. There were no objections to this approach during the the discussion period.

Council President Blaylock's idea to turn the Soccer Field, Softball Field and land northeast and south of it, into farmland; what he described as, "about 15 to 15 and half acres," was unanimously approved by all five members of the Council with no objections during the discussion period.

Final note: On Tuesday, February 20th, after the adjournment of the Town Council meeting, I was contacted by a citizen and reader of the New Harmony Gazette who said to me, "They demolished the softball fencing and dugouts before the meeting today. Don't they have to vote on things like that?" I went over to the Softball field myself and can confirm that as of the 20th the field was down. There were separate piles for the busted concrete blocks, the fencing that had been removed and the posts. As far as the question about the vote, I don't have an answer for that yet. But anyone who is interested could send that question to our Town Attorney Erin Bauer. I'm sure she would know! I spoke to Alvin Blaylock about the Softball Field demolition and he said that it was a cleanup project around the school grounds.

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## AGE ATTITUDE!

by: Ann Rains

I've got to admit, my attitude hasn't been the best. As parents and teachers, how often have we remarked to our children, "Life will be easier if you have a better attitude!" Who would have thought I would fall into that pit of grumbling? Surely not me! But as I awaken each morning to find another body part aching, it is difficult to refrain from grumbles.

Now, as I continue to read John Hillman's book, A Force of Character, I'm discovering what a bad attitude I have. And it is towards aging. I have to accept it. I'm getting old.

Hillman calls it an adventure. He states that just walking down a flight of steps with the knowledge that a bum knee could collapse is an adventure.

All those clichés you've heard, such as, "My mind wants to do it but my body doesn't," or "The golden years, phooey," are true. Mostly, it is realizing that maintenance is going to be an ongoing and regular pit stop.

I remember those salubrious youthful years, full of vim and vigor, how a visit to the doctor was rare. Like a brand new car, mileage was low on the body or chassis. Now, this vintage high mileage vehicle takes constant replacements, repairs and maintenance. And that's only the body!

The controls of the vehicle, the mind, are another issue altogether. I find myself repeating stories to friends. Scientists have found proof that exercise helps stave off mental decline. Exercise I'm getting aplenty — walking from one end of the house to the other trying to remember what I'm after.

Hillman's book verifies that with age, intuitiveness is enhanced. Reading and understanding those small quirks in voice and body language that give away whether a person is being truthful or not become easily read.

And sleep! Who needs it at this age? It's amazing how many books one can read with this newly acquired wakefulness. Sometimes it becomes a time of prayer or writing. Yes, sometimes I get sleepy during the day but not always. Instead of grumbling about sleeplessness, I am going to appreciate the change in circadian rhythms and what I've accomplished in the midnight hours.

Talking about gravity and what it is doing to me is not newspaper appropriate. Hillman does state that even people's ear lobes get longer. Now I am obsessed with observing everyone's ear lobes. If I don't gaze directly at you when we are talking, you can bring me back to attention by covering your ears.

Research on aging is mostly about the physiology of it. There are sparse studies on the psychology of aging. Thus, I am on a quest in these "golden years". It is a quest to change my attitude towards senescence — science or no science.

Job 32:7 "Age should speak; advanced years should teach wisdom."

planetprayers@gmail.com  
Rains January 12, 2012

(c) Ann

## GAVEL GAMUT

By: *Jim Redwine*

*Week of February 19, 2018*

### A WEE MOUSIE'S REVENGE

I can't relate in a family newspaper my very first thought as I slipped on that icy stoop at Jpeg Ranch and crashed precipitously into the large stone behind it. As I felt my left kidney complain about the cruel blow, my mind was in the pure reaction mode. Contemplation of the irony involved arose only after I realized I was not dead. Peg later said I must have actually landed on my head as there appeared to be no lasting damage.

But as the Good Book says, "In the beginning ..." Last Friday morning's near rendezvous with mortality began about 5:00 a.m. when I was shaving and heard Peg shriek, "Jim, get down here!" As I had experienced that tone for years I went ahead shaving thinking she probably had some task in mind for me that might be able to be avoided if I feigned deafness.

Peg stormed into the bathroom with the same attitude I remembered my drill sergeant had in basic training. "There's a mouse in the sticky trap behind the commode in the laundry room!" I figured this was not going away but held out a glimmer of hope the mouse may have managed to escape and, therefore, so could I. I made no reply.

"You (why me?) need to get that thing out of here right now! And take it out to the burn pile. Do not even try to just throw it in the trash until the trash men come next week." She is always at least one bad decision ahead of me.

Gentle Reader, you may recall that last Friday we still had the frozen remnants of ice and sleet from Mother Nature's assault. Most of it was melted but some had re-frozen. Unfortunately for me the clear, invisible ice still covered the path out to the burn pile and most importantly the deck and steps leading to the path. Hold that

thought.

Resigning myself to my spousal fate I checked behind the commode and found one fairly normal sized mouse looking at me with what appeared to be a respectful appeal for clemency. I picked up the trap and mouse with my left hand and headed out the three-season porch to the deck. Everything looked okay to me so I stepped down off the deck onto the large white stone step which also looked clear. Well, it was clear, clear ice.

Faster than the falling stock market I ended up crashing on my left kidney into the stoop and wishing I'd pass out. I didn't. I first processed the similarity between the excruciating pain I was currently feeling and the only slightly more exhilarating level brought on when I broke my leg skiing. Once I finished cursing the darkness I began to contemplate why I had not just released the mouse and let it slip on the ice. Instead the mouse pulled away from the now crumpled trap and as I helplessly watched it looked back over its shoulder with an expression that appeared to me both sardonic and sarcastic. It did not hang around to offer aid or comfort.

After about ten minutes of writhing on the ice-covered ground and trying to figure out how I could parlay the situation into some advantage against Peg, I struggled my way back into the house seeking sympathy. Peg said, "I do not see any blood and, more importantly, where's the mouse?" That was when the poem by Robert Burns, Ode to a Wee Mousie, came to mind. "The best laid plans of mice and men often go astray", or in my case, Peg's best laid plans for me.

Oh by the way, not only was Peg about as sympathetic as a traffic cop in Alabama when you have an Indiana license tag, but when I went to see Dr. Lee he took one brief but professional look and said, "You are not dying, it's only an ugly bruise. But if you want me to, I'll call Peg and tell her you cannot do any chores until Spring."

Unfortunately, he was only kidding.

For more Gavel Gamut articles go to  
www.jamesmredwine.com

## GAVEL GAMUT

By: Jim Redwine

Week of February 26, 2018

### THE MOUSE THAT ROARS

Gentle Reader, I ask you, "Is this fair?" Last week I barely escaped a medical catastrophe when I slipped on the ice while attempting to relocate a mouse from our house to a fiery fate. You may recall this whole thing was started by Peg who went ballistic when she found the mouse stuck in a trap. Apparently there is some universal law that mouse disposal is a husband's job.

After I fell and received zero sympathy from Peg I sought input from my legions of supporters who read Gavel Gamut. Well, forget that! I have heard from nearly everyone who read last week's column and they divide into three categories: (1) One person who accused me of cruelty to a mouse - even though it escaped as I almost died; (2) Three women who wondered how Peg could abide my whimpering; and, (3) an attorney from Orlando, Florida whose law firm specializes in representing mice. I'll just relate his letter for you.

## THE NEW-HARMONY GAZETTE.

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Dear Judge Redwine,

As members of the Bar we are amazed a judge would violate the rights of our client whose only error in judgement was to seek warmth in your converted barn home. Come on! You should expect such visitors as you live right in the middle of their community.

Be that as it may, please be advised that should you not cease and desist from your attempts to harm our client, legal action will ensue.

Respectfully, of course,  
Attorney Reyfert Hogart, Esq.

P.S. Peg has also contacted us with a question or two."

For more Gavel Gamut articles go to  
www.jamesmredwine.com

## BAKED COD W/ TOMATO HERB BUTTER

I have an absolutely delightful dish for you this month. This baked Cod is tender, delicious and easy! Then, top it off with this incredible, lite, aromatic sauce and we just hit a home run!

I hope you enjoy this simple meal as much as I do.



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Baked Cod w/ Tomato Herb Butter  
Serves 4-6

Sauce:

1/2 of a small red onion, chopped super fine  
3 cloves of fresh garlic, chopped fine  
1 Tbs olive oil  
1 1/2 c. Cherry tomatoes, halved  
1/2 c. Chicken stock  
1/4 c. Dry white wine  
1/2 tsp sea salt  
1/4 tsp red pepper flakes  
1/4 tsp sugar  
4 Tbs. Sliced butter  
3 Tbs. Fresh chopped herbs  
(Basil, parsley, chives, cilantro)

Cod:

2-2 1/2 lbs. fresh or frozen Cod  
1 lemon  
Salt & pepper

Preheat oven to 400 degrees  
Grease a 9 x 13 baking dish  
Pat dry Cod filets; salt and pepper them on both sides  
Place Cod in single layer, squeeze w/ lemon juice  
Cover w/ foil, bake 15-18 minutes or until flakey

Sauté in oil, onion & garlic in a medium skillet for about 5 minutes, or until soft.

Add tomatoes, stock, wine, salt, pepper flakes and sugar.

Simmer uncovered for about 15 minutes, until tomatoes break down and thickened.

Remove from heat and add herbs & butter

Pour over fish and let sit for 3 minutes  
Enjoy