

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

NEW-HARMONY, (IND.) January 1, 2019

**“DON’T SET YOUR SIGHTS
TOO HIGH!”**

Alvin Blaylock,
New Harmony Town Council
by: Dan Barton

President of the New Harmony Town Council, Alvin Blaylock, made that headline statement on December 18, 2018 just in time to win the “The New Harmony Gazette’s Biggest Understatement of the Year Award!” He was speaking of his noticeable mishandling of the sale of the former New Harmony School. In this particular case I’m referring to the constant and steady shrinking of the opportunity for our town to ever see a sensible profit from the school property sale.

Back in 2012, former Council President David Campbell stated in an interview with the Evansville Courier and Press that the New Harmony School had been appraised for a value of \$7 million dollars. In 2015, former Councilwoman Karen Walker announced at a Town Council meeting that the state of the art hardball-field, included in the school property, was worth a million dollars. A few months ago in 2018 Councilman Blaylock had an appraisal done on the school property and the results came back as a dismal \$360 thousand dollars. Even Blaylock himself admitted that he was disappointed.

Now, after following our past New Harmony Town Council’s tradition of only advertising the property to a limited population, in this case in two Posey County newspapers and for a bid of not lower than \$360 thousand dollars, he must be even more disappointed. He only received two bids on the former New Harmony School property. One bid was for \$80 thousand dollars from Lupfer Equipment, LLC. Blaylock didn’t bother to announce that name at the Council meeting. It was learned later that Lupfer Equipment is listed as being owned

by Joseph Lupfer of Cynthiana. It’s identified as an asphalt paving company.

The second bid for the New Harmony School property was for only \$10 thousand dollars. But this bid was restricted to just the 56,000 square foot building and five acres. Blaylock didn’t identify which five acres. The name of the \$10 thousand dollar bidder was also kept quiet by Blaylock in the meeting. He did mention that there was a “gentleman” in the audience who was one of the two bidders. He never announced his name or what organization he represented or even what property he had bid on. Thanks to work done by David Campbell in his letter to the editor of the Posey County News, the bidder has been identified as the pastor of the New Life Apostolic Church, Richard Giles, of Carmi, Illinois. The pastor was not invited by Blaylock to speak at the Town Council meeting and explain what his plans are for the property, if he should own it. At the end of the meeting Roger Wade asked Pastor Giles to stay behind so that they could speak to him privately.

In six years we have gone from \$125 per square foot, to \$6.42 per square foot, to a potential of \$1.43 per square foot, and now an impossible impossibility of 18 cents per square foot. Now Blaylock is warning us not to set our sights set too high. I don’t think he’s telling us anything we haven’t already figured out. Does it appear that Blaylock has next to no ability in the field of real estate? Or is it just me?

Over the past several months many of us have tried to urge him to be more aggressive in marketing this property. Last Spring both myself and New Harmony town resident, Tom Stahl, tried to get him moving on the sale of the former New Harmony School. The Working Men’s Institute had given up on it’s erstwhile farm to table project at the school in December 2017. For weeks following WMI’s failure, in 2018, Mr. Blaylock and his Council sat and did

nothing. Finally, here we are almost a year later and instead of listing it with a professional real estate broker or agent, after the state mandated 60 day bid listing period has been completed, he has decided to once again go through another, this time unnecessary, bidding process, lowering the minimum bid requirements substantially. It appears that he’s drastically lowering his own “sights.” Not ours!

Councilman David Flanders asked the Town Attorney, Erin Bauer, during the December Council meeting if the Council was not now at the place where the property could be listed with a broker instead of going through another bidding process. Lawyer Bauer’s answer was, “You could do that (list with a broker) right now if the Town Council decided to reject all of the bids and make a motion to hire a broker or an auctioneer. That would be an option.” But no one on the Council even attempted to make any such motion. Flanders did pursue the topic in a discussion format. He stated to Blaylock that in the prior 60 day listing of the property that the Town Council did the minimal in advertising. He stated, “We didn’t do a very robust advertising campaign to solicit bids.” He went on to say, “At this point I would suggest entertaining the services of a broker.” But he did not try to make a formal motion in that regard during the meeting. Blaylock countered him by saying that, “We have a motion on the floor and your getting into a different subject!” I’d like to point out that the motion language was changed several times during the meeting from what it said when it was first introduced, without any objections from Blaylock.

The School property has been mishandled and mismanaged by Blaylock’s Council and the former Council since the school closed. Two consecutive Councils have allowed the HVAC system to turn off and to be left off for three summers in a row, causing

three hundred thousand dollars worth of damage. In a previous Council meeting late last Spring I advised Councilman Blaylock that the HVAC could be repaired, according to estimates compiled by WMI president Fred Frayser, for as little as \$9,500 dollars. His answer was that the company doing the repairs could not give him a five year guarantee. Anybody out there get a five year guarantee when they come out and repair your central air? So to save \$9,500 dollars he allowed the Air to stay off and certainly must have caused additional mold problems to recur. He had \$20 thousand dollars sitting in the school fund account at the time. Over the past year he has depleted that fund account by almost \$10 thousand dollars. In addition to all this, the Town of New Harmony had previously spent \$40 thousand dollars to stop the mold growth from the original damage done by the negligence of the previous Council. That didn't seem to faze Blaylock, he simply ignored the problem and left the HVAC in non-working order.

Now Blaylock sounds like he is seriously considering taking one of the two most recent bids for the school if he doesn't get a better offer in his next futile attempt, saying, "I want to caution everyone here. Don't get your sights too high. You know for three years we tried to give the school away for a dollar!" Oh come on now Blaylock, you're talking about The Working Men's Institute project. The difference that Blaylock's leaving out is that the WMI is a quasi-governmental entity that has existed in New Harmony since 1838. Nathan Maudlin, vice president of the WMI, had given Blaylock the go ahead to market the school from the time that Blaylock took office in January 2016. Blaylock never took one step forward on that advice. WMI also said that if they could not successfully complete their project or failed during any phase of it, after they took title, that they would only ask for the return of whatever money they had put into the property. A fair deal all around! There is no comparison to what is now taking place, and Blaylock knows it.

Who knows, maybe Blaylock will get

lucky and he will manage to take the lowest of the two bids somehow. That does seem to be his goal. I'm not sure what a church from Carmi, with a very large and modern facility of their own, would have in mind for a property like the former New Harmony School, but I have a feeling we may be finding out. I doubt that they need another church. Maybe some kind of Country Club and golf course, I was thinking. That would work for Blaylock. But I doubt that's it. Carmi already has the Carmi Country Club, so that idea wouldn't make any sense. Would it?

But, as it stands, other than Flanders, the Council voted to reject the first two school property bids and approve a new advertisement for thirty days to solicit new bids, with \$80 thousand as a minimum for the entire property and \$10 thousand for the former school building and five acres.

"A Man's Character is His Fate!"
Heraclites

**MURPHY PARK CLOSED TO
AUTOMOBILE AND TRUCK
TRAFFIC!**

by: Dan Barton

Most of you may have noticed the traffic horses in front of the entrance of Murphy Park blocking automobile and truck traffic. I asked Council President Blaylock what that was all about. He said to me that the Council had decided to take that action in order to preserve the roadway surface. They believe that in the winter months more damage is done by heavy vehicles because of the freezing and thawing of the roadway. Blaylock said that golf carts would still be allowed to use the park roadway but would have to enter near the Boy Scout building on the north east end of the park and travel over the grassed area to the roadway.

Councilman Blaylock indicated that because the state of Indiana doesn't yet recognize the park road as a street that the town cannot get state funding through the Community Crossings grant to pay for re-surfacing and so they've opted for the preservation approach. He

said that he is hopeful that in the future the state will give them the recognition needed and they can qualify the park roadway for grant money. He also stated that the roadway would be reopened to cars and trucks in the Spring.

**HARMONY WAY BRIDGE
AUTHORITY UPDATE!**

by: Dan Barton

Lora Arneberg reports that the Indiana Harmony Way Bridge Authority has not heard anything from Illinois regarding their appointments to the Illinois Authority. She added that due to the recent U.S. Government shutdown the legislation they were expecting to get approved was not done before the end of 2018. They will try again when the new 2019 session opens. "Delays!" she said, "But definitely not an end to the process."

Perseverance is the key. It's only when you quit that you guarantee your defeat. Keep up the good work, Lora.

**THREE SOUTH STREET LOTS
BEING RE-BID BY TOWN
COUNCIL!**

by: Dan Barton

The Town Council had set minimum bid limits on the recent advertisements to sell the three open lots on South Street that the Town owns; all three for \$75 thousand dollars. They advertised these lots through only the two County newspapers, the Posey County News and the Mt. Vernon Democrat, and received just one bid for them. That bid came from Rodney Wade, a New Harmony building contractor. His bid was for \$45 thousand for the three.

Councilman Roger Wade made a motion that, in accordance with advice from town attorney Bauer, that the bid be rejected as under the minimum required, and that a counteroffer be made to Rodney Wade for \$53 thousand dollars. The motion was approved by the Council. Rodney Wade's name was not revealed by the Town Council during the Council meeting and was acquired by

the Gazette from a letter to the editor of the Posey County News written by New Harmony resident and former Town Council President David Campbell.

ALVIN BLAYLOCK PUSHES FOR HIGHER TRASH COLLECTION RATES!

by: Dan Barton

New Harmony Town Council president Alvin Blaylock said at the December Town Council meeting that he is for urging higher trash collection rates in New Harmony. He said that the current rate reflected on everyone's utility bills should be raised from the monthly \$8 dollar rate to \$10 dollars per month. That's a 25% increase in collection rates. He didn't get a motion to his recommendation for the increase.

Councilman Roger Wade wanted to know exactly what Blaylock's reason was for asking for the new rate adjustment. Blaylock said it was because, "The rates of the people picking up the trash keeps increasing and the twice a year cleanup that we do the town gets charged by the ton, etc. etc." He went on to say, "We're spending more than we're taking in. So it's not working and we haven't had an increase in nine years. After nine years we're looking at an increase. I guess we can either get an increase in the rates or just start running in the red. It's up to you guys. Go for it!"

Roger Wade then suggested that they just do the trash pickups once a year to save money and not have a rate increase. Wade said, "Is there some way we can change that?" Blaylock said, "We are under contract for two years. At the end of 2019 there will be a new contract and then we can look at it. So we need to do something. Let's go! Let's go!"

Wade then made a motion to table the rate increase discussion until the January 2019 meeting, which got the other Councilmembers approval and passed. Blaylock said, "Ok! We will table it till next month and it will be the same thing, so get ready!"

The only support that Council president Blaylock got on his increase suggestion was from audience member

and Harmony Township resident Chris Laughbaum. Ms. Laughbaum said, "I don't think \$10 is too much to pay for trash pick up per month. If they had to haul it to someplace themselves they'd pay a lot more money. I think they ought to be glad to pay only \$10 per month."

Stay tuned for next month's trash rate discussion folks!

SWEET SEASONS

by: Ann Rains

Sweet season, we are smack dab in the middle of it. It starts at Halloween when trick or treaters heavily armed with humongous half-full garbage bags come calling. I have always been adverse to doling out candy to little (and big) children. Instead, in years past, I have dropped pencils adorned with pumpkin faces or ghosts into the bag. The result—a look of horror on the trick or treaters' face. It made me inadvertently touch my face to check to see if I was wearing a mask!

When you think about the sugar we are allowing our children to eat, is it any wonder that our nation has the fattest population on Earth? Sugar is toxic. I discovered ten reasons not to include sugar in our diets. This is a nearly, if not completely, impossible goal of food intake. But learning what sugar does to us may help us understand the risks we are taking when sugar becomes addictive, and we seem to be aiding and abetting our children with this addiction.

Without going into great detail, the list of the toxic effects of sugar includes: raising cholesterol, raising risk of heart disease, causing depression, increasing fat storage around your liver, restricting blood vessels, zapping energy, causing you to overeat and ladies, beware, causing wrinkles! (Activebeat, Internet)

The sweet season is in full swing now. With Thanksgiving came the plethora of pies...coconut and banana cream with meringue three inches high, pumpkin, cherry, and my newest Thanksgiving endeavor of a chocolate pecan pie. Not to mention all the other sugar hiding in the Thanksgiving meal, such as cranberry

sauce, various jello salads and breads.

It is almost impossible to cook without using sugar. For some reason, Stevia, which is a natural plant derivative, and twice as sweet as sugar, is considered artificial and safe for diabetes. I use it often. Other artificial sweeteners, like Splenda, I try to avoid.

Next in the sweet season is Christmas. I remember as a child that a box of chocolate covered cherries was always under the tree. What did we all receive from the teacher at school? Candy canes and other sweets. A girlfriend, who made candy turtles, peanut butter balls and other candy treats as Christmas gifts, passed away not long ago. There are many who miss her and her home-made candies. But I miss her more than the candy.

Our Christmas meal & desserts will be heavily laden with sugar. Sugar may have more detrimental effects on our health than earlier noted. What do you put in yeast to help it grow when you are baking bread? Sugar. I think sugar exacerbates the growth of bacteria in our guts and bodies, like it does the yeast. Think Crohn's disease and arthritis.

The Eskimos had no sweet season and no rotten teeth until being introduced to sugar laden foods.(BMJ Journals, Internet) As we embark on the Christmas season, think of ways to lighten the sugar burden and still stay in good graces with your family. Not an easy assignment! We won't even talk about what has happened to Easter Eggs.

Have a sweet, not sugary, Happy New Year!

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© Ann Rains

GAVEL GAMUT

By Jim Redwine

Week of 17 December 2018

MALEVOLENT OR INDIFFERENT

For thousands of years humans have pondered the same theological issues: Are there gods and, if so, are they benevolent, malevolent or indifferent towards humans? Of course, this debate can readily be applied to humans without

reference to gods. How do we relate to one another? Are we generally good, bad or indifferent towards others?

In my work I have almost never encountered a purely evil person nor an unfailingly good one. My experience has been that most of us fall into neither category. Pretty much we just muddle through life somewhere between these extremes while generally behaving rather indifferently to much of what passes by.

That basic human tendency is what leads us to put off until, maybe, later what we should address today. It is not a failure of conscience that results in inaction; it is simply more comfortable to ignore injustice than to address it, especially if it is a collective community injustice from long ago. Such is what has led us away from publicly recognizing the events of October and November 1878.

No one alive bears any direct culpability for injustices done to Jim Good, Edward Warner, Jeff Hopkins, William Chambers, Daniel Harrison (Harris), Sr., Daniel Harrison, Jr. and John Harrison in Posey County, Indiana in 1878 by virtually the entire white power structure. But we can now begin to absolve our community of one hundred and forty years of injustice and indifference. In other words, we should not look to the gods for absolution, it is we who must deliver ourselves.

Want to read other Gavel Gamut articles? Go to www.jamesmredwine.com Or "Like" us on Facebook at JPegRanchBooksandKnitting

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January Gazette Recipe 2019

by: Denise Rapp

Pear Tart

If your looking for a delicious new treat to serve to your friends, then this is the recipe for you. This tart has a nutty substantial crust, gooey custard filling and topped with sweet baked pears. But the kicker, is this thin apricot glaze spilled over the top!

Crust:

1/2c. Soft Butter
1/4c. Brown Sugar
1c. Flour
1/4c. Rolled Oats
1/4c. Chopped Walnuts

Cream butter & brown sugar until fluffy. Add flour, Oats & walnuts. Blend until creamy, press dough into your Tart pan. Set aside.

Filling:

3 oz. Almond Paste
1/3c. Granulated Sugar
1/2c. Soft Butter
2 eggs
1 tsp. Vanilla
3 firm, ripe pears. Peeled, cored & sliced.

Glaze:

1 orange juiced
4 oz. apricot preserves, melted & strained.

Directions

Preheat oven 350.
Cream almond paste & sugar. Add the butter, eggs and vanilla; mix until smooth.
Add filling to Tart shell.
In a single layer, place pear slices (in any desired pattern).
Bake 35-40 minutes or until lightly browned.

While that's baking: Make your apricot glaze.
Add orange juice & jam. Mix & push through a strainer.

Spread out over warm Tart.

Cool & Enjoy!

KIWANIS KORNER

by: Dan Barton

On January 28th New Harmony resident and woodcarver extraordinaire, Donnie Martin, will speak at the 6 p.m. meeting of the New Harmony Kiwanis club. He will talk about his life as a carver and bring samples of some of his lifelike bird carvings. They truly appear to be alive! If you are a fan of birds or woodcarving, then you really don't want to miss this one. The meeting will take place at the Main Street Cafe. The Public is invited to attend.

Kiwanis is still in desperate need of members. We have participated in the life of New Harmony since 1947. Unless our Club gains substantially in the number of people from our community interested in serving, 2019 could very well be the final year. Let's go folks-give a hand! Join the Kiwanis Club of New Harmony-Now! We meet twice a month at 6 p.m. on the second and fourth Monday at the Main Street Cafe.



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