

WEST

Newsmagazine

Vol. 24 No. 27 • November 13, 2019

westnewsmagazine.com

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EDITORIAL

Random Thoughts

With a tip of our hat to retired columnist Thomas Sowell, we offer the following random thoughts on the passing scene:

TROLLEY-LA-LA-LA: Let's see if we can figure this out. The Loop Trolley announced a few weeks ago that it needed \$200,000 or it would cease operations in November, and then it would need another \$500,000 or it would cease operating in January. Predictably, nobody jumped in and loaned \$700,000 to an entity that had just \$30,000 in revenues. Now, we are told the Trolley has effectively loaned itself \$90,000 and that much smaller amount will be able to magically fund the operation into January. A boondoggle on rails.

PIT BULLS AND PAROLEES: It's hard to imagine that a government entity used as a political bargaining chip by former County Executive and current inmate Steve Stenger is in turmoil. Oh wait, no it isn't, not hard at all. It is, however, truly disturbing that something as seemingly benign as St. Louis County's pet adoption center finds itself as a metaphor for everything wrong with government today. There is data manipulation, accusations of racism, sexism and cronyism, and now there is a federal lawsuit to sort it all out. This is an animal shelter staffed by volunteers who were fired-not-fired last week for reminding politicians that they were an animal shelter. We are going to the dogs, indeed.

IN FULL BLOOM: Hey everybody, a billionaire businessman from New York is running for president! Correction, another billionaire businessman from New York is running for president. Michael Bloomberg threw his hat into the ring for the Democratic nomination last week once he appar-

ently became the last person in the country to realize that Joe Biden is a terrible candidate. So now the Democrats, the party of youth, diversity and the downtrodden, pin their hopes on a 77-year old, billionaire white dude.

BAD BOYS, BAD BOYS: There is virtually no chance that the leadership of the St. Louis County Police makes it through to the other side of the current troubles. At the end of last month, a jury awarded a police officer nearly \$20 million after it was determined that he was discriminated against because he is gay. The chairman of the St. Louis County Board of Police Commissioners has already resigned, and two new members were appointed last week, but this will inevitably result in a complete overhaul of the police department's leadership structure.

CARDINAL SIN: The situation with the Cardinal Ritter football program is ludicrous. They allowed a suspended player to participate in a game using a fake name and fake number. The entire team was punished, and their final games were cancelled. The coaching staff was fired. Now, the former head coach has told KMOV that it was just a mistake and that he did not know that the player should have sat out the game. Really? Then why suit up the player in a fake number with a fake name? Ludicrous, and unbecoming of the entire profession.

WING TIP: We doff our collective cap to the Orthwein family, who donated \$1 million to Wings of Hope for their endowment. Wings of Hope is a special organization and the local community has done an amazing job of providing support. Here's to many more years of living out their mission. Well done.

and the current tax is 1%, there is no way we could have a tax increase," Nation said. "That information is completely false."

Although he didn't mention him by name, the mayor was referring to council member Ben Keathley [Ward 2], who he accused of "throwing the city under the bus."

"To accuse me of lying and cheating is wrong," Keathley said.

On Oct. 30, Keathley posted the following statements to Twitter:

"Last night @ChesterfieldCH council discussed hiring a PR firm to market a sales tax increase to voters. Using tax dollars to convince taxpayers to pay more taxes is nauseating. Discussion took place a half hour BEFORE the posted start time. Not ok."

Keathley denied the mayor's accusations and stated that he simply had expressed concern from elected officials about the upcoming court decision.

A discussion about hiring a PR firm did take place at the recent Finance and Administration Committee meeting; however, it focused on explaining the Supreme Court ruling to the public, not pushing for a tax increase. That discussion happened early in the meeting when the mayor was not present. While the website calendar stated the meeting was to start at 6 p.m., it started at 5:30 p.m.

"Twenty people were there on time, the

mayor was late," said council member Barbara McGuinness [Ward 1]. "He missed the entire discussion."

Wings of Hope receives \$1 million gift

The Wings of Hope Soaring to New Heights Endowment Campaign recently received a boost thanks to a \$1 million gift from the William R. Orthwein, Jr. and Laura Rand Orthwein Foundation, growing the endowment to nearly \$8 million and moving it closer to its \$10 million phase-one goal.

"We are beyond grateful for this important gift and the generosity of the Orthwein family," Bret Heinrich, Wings of Hope president and CEO, said. "This is a major gift for Wings of Hope but even more meaningful for the countless families and children whose lives will be forever changed for the better because of it."

The goal of the endowment campaign is to provide Wings of Hope, a Chesterfield-based nonprofit, the capital to secure the planes and resources needed to expand the organization's Medical Relief & Air Transport [MAT] program—allowing it to serve 50% more people with free transportation to health care.

"My family has deep roots in the St. Louis community and we are committed to

caring for it," Foundation President Nettie O. Dodge said. "The Foundation made a significant initial investment in Wings of Hope in 2007 and a more significant additional investment in 2010 for the same reason we are investing in their endowment today. We believe in Wings of Hope and its mission. Our investment in Wings of Hope today will help to ensure that they will be able to provide their excellent services well into the future."

Senator Elizabeth Dole, honorary chair of the endowment campaign, also praised Wings of Hope and its network of support programs.

"By providing free medical air transportation, they lighten the immense burden families shoulder when caring for loved ones in serious medical crises," Dole said. "They replace helplessness with hope and give families the support they need to navigate what can be a long and terrifying road to healing."

Wings of Hope, headquartered in Chesterfield, utilizes aviation and volunteer efforts to bring care and resources to isolated communities in need across the globe. In the U.S., they provide free medical air transport services to individuals in need of specialized medical care. The organization also works with in-country partners in countries around the world to fly people in remote areas to emergency medical care

and fly doctors into communities with no local health care.

Wings of Hope has been twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. In 2018, they served over 67,000 people worldwide.

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Trip planned for Jewish teens

The Jewish Federation of St. Louis is accepting applications for Israel Bound 2020, a three-week trip to Israel bringing together Jewish high school students from the St. Louis community. Participants will have the opportunity to explore ancient Jerusalem and modern Tel Aviv, float in the Dead Sea, climb Masada at sunrise, ride a camel in the Negev Desert and sleep in a Bedouin tent, surf in the Mediterranean, reflect at the Kotel, the Western Wall and much more.

The trip will run from June 1-21, 2020, making Israel Bound 2020 one of the earliest trips available for teens that get them back in time for camp programs, work and other activities. To view a video about Israel Bound, visit JFedSTL.org/Local-Trips.

The trip will cost \$6,075 all-inclusive including air fare. Early-bird pricing of \$5,675 is available through Dec. 31, 2019.

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