

## **SPOILED BRATS AND FAT CATS: Handling *The Truth***

I'm going to quote Jack Nicholson, whose ability to sniff out B.S. and *call* it B.S. -- an old-fashioned quality I miss more each year -- to help me sum up the most-recently-inspired S.I.R.E. (Self Interests Rule Everything) publication, amusingly called *Sultanites for The Truth*. Jack's most-quoted rant -- "*The Truth? You can't handle the truth!*"-- is what I would say to Mr. Dalmasso's article, *Spoiled Brats* (published in his Vol. 1, Issue 1, 2/11/03 issue). Although, to give him credit, he does do an excellent job of *mis-handling* the truth.

I've been sitting here waiting for three weeks for someone -- anyone -- to step up to the plate and hit a homer from Dalmasso's sloppily-thrown, wibbly-wobbly pitches, trying to find home plate, but it seems everyone wants to *walk* from his assertions rather than hitting it smack outta da ballpark. And not being known for much patience in these matters, I just can't stand it anymore. I'm going to take a swing at it. It shouldn't take too much exertion, but I'm afraid it may take awhile.

**FIRST PITCH: A tad off-target. Hits a little girl in the stands who spills her coke on fans in the next two rows, who choke on their hot dogs, sending the crowd into a panic.**

Bart Says: "*Some folks believe the end justifies the means...all this is to gain their own selfish agenda.*" Thanks, Bart. You just made our point for us, that's what we say about *you*.

Let's take a peek at the line-up of these self-interested, selfish ProSultan players, shall we?

### **ProSultan "Selfishness"**

#### **Councilman and Dr. Mark Raney:**

A councilman who originally become involved in city politics because of the egregious wetland destruction and other violations during construction that occurred -- quite literally -- right under his nose: Pleasantview (a.k.a. Miller Farm) bordered his property. And despite extensive communication with the city and developer, violations continued. Raney wins a council seat to help the city turn aside its rotten ways, then Baby-faced Brady Boucher files a nuisance recall that the umpire -- judge -- called high and wide. *Re-e-e-e-ly* wide.

A local doctor who treats hundreds of community members, he makes people *well* not rich ("Not that there's anything wrong with *that!*") And of course he gets paid for this service, it's his job and calling. But perhaps his greatest gift to Sultan and people eastward will be his clutch play in the bottom of the 9<sup>th</sup> inning with bases loaded: Saving the only health clinic between Stevens Pass and Monroe from extinction.

***Mark Raney's "Selfish Interest"? He wants to build a beautiful Sultan future with healthy ideas, economy and children. Oh, and he wants to see things done right. The first time.***

### **Councilman Jeff Everett**

After seeing the code violations, lack of enforcement and accountability within the city first-hand in Eagle Ridge and later, in Willow Run, Everett wins a council seat.

Nicknamed "Buzz-killer" by Councilman Dusty Boucher, Jeff's unswerving scrutiny of statutes and codes keeps us ALL honest. Such dedication and talent doesn't come easily, and only after countless hours of constant research. He created a city council website so citizens could have access to important information and news, after it becomes clear that the city won't spend any money to publish one. He does it unselfishly on his own time. He does it with his own money. And he does it well.

***Jeff Everett's "Selfish interest"? He wants to see things done right. The first time.***

### **Planning Commissioner Jeff Kirkman**

A positive result from one of the city's biggest blunders: Willow Run. Jeff gives selflessly of his time and money to try and right the wrongs allowed by the city during Willow Run's construction, violating federal, state and city laws. He represented 53 other Willow Run homeowners in a "little guy" appeal of the City's highly-suspect decision on the Boucher short plat. Later, information comes to light that some rather significant misrepresentations were made during that approval process as it relates to Osprey Park's annexation. The city charges him (on behalf of 54 residents) \$1,500 for the privilege of filing an appeal, which Ed Boucher fought tooth-and-nail to try and dismiss, then bills him several thousand more to cover the city's cost of this charade. As a Planning Commissioner, Jeff works for a better future for us all, even though he owns no property or business here from which he will benefit financially.

***Jeff Kirkman's "Selfish Interest"? He has spent thousands of hours and dollars to see some of the wrongs righted. Oh, and he wants to see things done right. The first time.***

### **John Dick**

A father of five, John moved his family here because of the rural environment. He served, briefly, on the planning commission, but resigned because of the duplicity of purpose he encountered, feeling frustrated that he didn't seem to be making a difference. John's recent resurgence into the political arena was fired (pun intended) by Mayor Rowe's illegal actions against Police Chief Fred Walser. And as a resident of a dead-end, closely-knit sub-community of Sultan, his unselfish activism was fired even further when a developer/real estate agent sued several of his neighbors in order to gain a 10-foot easement required to develop a 30-unit apartment house-style condominium on a tiny piece of property abutting his neighbors' backyards. John feels the City Fathers aren't listening. As he put it in his own inimitable way, "There's no ears here." John's also the owner-operator of a small butcher shop. You want to know where the beef is? Look no further.

*John Dick's "Selfish Interest"? He's standing up for the little guy, and wants his children to grow up in a well-run, beautiful city. Oh, and he also wants to see things done right. The first time.*

### **Perry McPherson**

Finally, there's ProSultan Chairman Perry McPherson, a man who's about as selfish as they come. He and his wife Barbara have raised their children here and lived in Sultan for over 20 years. Cut from sturdy cloth, Perry's one of those rare individuals whose integrity simply cannot be questioned. Ever. He became involved in Sultan politics when he couldn't get any information from the city on a current land use action near his home. (*That* one sounds familiar!) His maturity and wisdom imbues him with a long-term perspective of life and what's *really* important.

*Perry McPherson's "Selfish Interest"? He wants to make the world a better place. Oh, and he also wants to see things done right. The first time.*

YUP. It sure sounds like this group of rotten scoundrels will do just about anything to achieve their own selfish interests.

### **SECOND PITCH: Getting closer to home plate, but it looks like a change-up to me.**

Bart derides ProSultan's goal of accountable government by comparing it to the Civil War. Wha-a-a?

Bart's fairly fuzzy argument (now try to keep up, here, okay?) is that a government being run by seven members cannot be accountable because, like America's Civil War with two *different* countries, the city's government would be run by seven *different* entities, i.e., seven council members. I guess Bart doesn't grasp the basic premise of majority rule and tie-breaking votes from an odd-number of members in a governing body. In actuality, the city would be run by a single entity -- the *council* -- not by the professional manager, rather than a mayor and council, *two entities*. (Except in Sultan's case where the mayor has made edicts and then ignored actions on which the council voted. Unless, of course, it fit his plan.)

### **THIRD PITCH: Finally, one over the plate, but high and wild, hitting the umpire's facemask.**

Bart posits the argument that a professional administrator will not help the city because they've all had to be fired and they all ended up suing the city.

Bart, Bart, Bart, God bless ya, man; you need to take a whiff of snuff or something to clear that furry, blurry head of yours!

First, Sultan has never had a "professional" administrator, not in this context. An administrator of manager who is a professional is not the same thing as a Professional Administrator/Manager reporting to the council, and you darn well know it. One reports

ONLY to the mayor (in a mayor-council form) and one reports ONLY to the council (in a council-manager form).

Second, Bill Trippett quit as soon as Rowe was elected, as he had no wish to become a party to his shenanigans, a wise choice, as it turned out. Roy Bysegger was fired for doing his job correctly and legally, and for being honest about how the DNR letter, requesting comments on the 600-acre gravel pit project, came to be "found" after the legal comment period had expired, in Building Official Craig Bruner's office.

Third, the council did not select these individuals. The *mayor* did. Although to be totally honest, even though the mayor's preference was Roy Bysegger and a committee interviewed him, the mayor withheld information on Mr. Bysegger's background, a sneaky act (*big surprise*) which may have resulted in a different outcome.

Fourth, Bart states that all of these city managers, administrators, the police chief, planning commissioners and council members have all sued the city, therefore drawing a contrived conclusion no one would wish to work for the city, and thus, any new manager would not have any job security. If we rephrased that high-and-wide pitch to read, "No one would thus wish to work for a *mayor* in Sultan," you'd almost make it over the plate. Really, that type of wild pitch should be confined to the spit-and-scratch bullpen.

**FOURTH PITCH: A fast and slick spitball, slipped out of Bart's hand before he could even release it.**

Bart says of the LID 97-1 fiasco: *"A portion of the [\$4 million] cost overrun was caused by the federal government imposing the 4d rule, which was retroactively enforced, to protect the salmon."*

Question for Bart: How many countless hours have you spent pouring over LID 97-1 documents and correspondence? Answer: Zippo, zilch, nada, bupkis. You've been fed dried out, dusty pabulum that no one -- not even Mayor Rowe -- could choke down anymore. Besides, the 4d rule became effective *after* the botched construction in the wetlands and buffer area in the LID 97-1 area and had nothing whatsoever to do with the cost overruns and a project completion delayed almost two years.

But even if we erroneously assumed it might have played a part, the city was forewarned several years in advance during the grant process via a November 18, 1998 letter from the U.S. Dept. of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration/National Marine Fisheries that: *"Presently, coho salmon....range in the project area and are candidate species eligible for listing under the ESA. Although C species are not afforded protection under the ESA, **it would be prudent to incorporate project design features that avoid or minimize impacts** to anadromous fish resources should they become listed at a later date."* [emphasis mine] But the city ignored this, as well as subsequent, warnings, even after the Coho were listed. The damage was done to fulfill the rush for the Goal to grab the Gold. End of story.

## **FIFTH PITCH: Whoa! Look at that curve ball move!**

Bart accuses ProSultan members of hypocrisy.

Think I got some whiplash trying to follow this one. Bart says the ProSultan group can justify the need for a professional manager because it is *they* who have driven up consultants' and attorneys' costs in their search for accountability, and, thus, lawsuits.. But let me see if I've got this right. In their efforts to try and strengthen accountable, legal processes in a Cowboy-run Wild West City, it's the fault of the pro-law white hatters, rather than those perpetrating and perpetuating the illegal acts? Is Bart's "solution" to correcting all the catastrophes and preventing new ones that we all simply close our eyes and pretend nothing is wrong?

Bart states the reason consultant fees spiral out of control is because "the group", i.e., ProSultan-type people, *"Ask endless and senseless questions and drag on and on the need to have the consultants continue."* Don't you mean until it's done properly, Bart?

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## **GAME ENDS. LET'S MOVE INTO THE CLUB HOUSE FOR THE WRAP-UP....**

**Margaret Skogland:** *"How many lawsuits does it take to break a city?"*

Answer: You mean the ones that were necessary to ensure that the law was followed?

**Iris Jensen:** *"Small town flavor is preserved by citizen-elected mayors, not by big city professionals."* Actually, "Big city professionals" will be working for Sultan's small city council, rather than previous Sultan mayors, some of whose actions -- "flavors" -- have left a bad taste.

**Robert Criswell:** *"Good neighbors help each other, they don't fight each other!"* Couldn't agree more on that one. I guess the disagreements and fights begin when someone *doesn't* agree with what Rob or C. H. wants

**Iris Jensen** asserts that the ProSultan folks should sign their name to their articles. I couldn't agree more.

## **ADVANTAGES OF A MAYOR-COUNCIL FORM OF GOVERNMENT (ACCORDING TO "THE TRUTH"):**

**Advantage #1: It is way less expensive to keep a volunteer mayor rather than a manager at \$72,000-96,000 annually.**

Rebuttal: Agreed. A professional manager is certainly more expensive than a low-budget volunteer mayor. But a part-time mayor with financial self-interests motivating him or her can -- and has -- created some mighty expensive messes to clean up. Perhaps that \$100,000 for a manager is a real bargain when compared against the

hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, spent on consultant fees, attorneys and non-productive staff time.

**Advantage #2: "The mayor is accountable every day to you rather than a more powerful city council."**

Rebuttal: Sultan has a part-time mayor whose time is spent running a full-time business. This particular mayor has gone to extremes to NOT be held accountable, except to developers and a few "Brand Name" Sultan families. The council has not been "powerful", as the mayor runs the city staff and they do what HE says, not the council. A city manager *must* conform and perform to council desires.

**Advantage #3: Administration of city business is conducted by your elected official.**

Rebuttal: Think again. The mayor gives general marching orders to staff only, except in those cases where he has a predetermined result in mind, either to benefit himself, or other financial interests. The staff runs city hall, managed primarily by Clerk Laura Koenig.

**THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE...**

There were more listed, but at the risk of making this an analysis rather than a too-long editorial (too late!), I'll address one final subject. THE TRUTH.

This newsletter states: " Sultanites for **THE TRUTH** has been on the minds of its mentors for years as a means to provide the true facts on past, current and future issues and events.

This newsletter is nothing more than a beefed up, buffed up version of the libelous Sultan Concerned Citizens (SCC) newsletters sent out during 2001's campaign, followed shortly by Kenton Coy's special interest-financed *Sky Valley Weekly News*. Despite the new "smell" of this version of "the truth," the message is still the same: S.I.R.E. is King in Sultan. Those folks who have money, get; and those who want the most, get it all. This small group of people are ruled either by their own desire for wealth and power, or their wish to be connected to it. But actions performed by some of the leaders of this group to tighten their grasp on their eroding power base which is slowly yet steadily slipping through their fingers, have made it clear to all what "their own selfish agenda" really is. And they have made greed a four-letter word rather than simply one of the Seven Deadly Sins and one of the most oft-broken Ten Commandment sins.

It's way past time for some of the basically good-hearted but mislead people who support this small self interest group to reevaluate the reasons why they embrace it.

"**THE TRUTH**" is out there. But you won't read about it in Dalmasso's newsletter. If you feel you can "handle" it, seek for it on the [ittakesgrit.org](http://ittakesgrit.org)'s website, surfing city documents.