



Dozing into the New Year

Robert Hankins, The Record Newspapers
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Having fallen asleep in many city council meetings, I can probably tell you it's the right thing to do.

Here's a dream I had a few evenings ago. It's written in novel form because all writers dream that way; we just can't type it up at the same time.

Mayor Steve Sanders' eyes shifted from the left, then the right. What was on the agenda, he wondered? He quickly scanned his packet, which had been expertly prepared by his secretary.

Same old story. The Wendy's on Oceanside wanted to be annexed, but the Dairy Queen across the street didn't like it.

Also on the agenda, a new problem for the tugboat captains; and in other business there was a big pile of trash over on Fifth Street.

He turned to Councilman Billings and said, "You know, if I didn't get to bang a gavel every now and then, I wouldn't even be in politics.

"This meeting is called to order," he said.

"I'd like to ask our new city manager, Phil Phillips, to say the prayer. Mr. Phillips went to Princeton, we appreciate him being here and think he will do a great job."

"Certainly mayor," Phillips said. "I'd be happy to say the prayer."

Phillips continued, "Now I lay me down to sleep, pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I die before I wake. Pray the Lord my soul to take. Ahhhhh. Men."

Sanders was stunned. And this was on Cable Channel 3? Could they edit it out?

"Is that it?" he asked. "Is that all you can come up with?"

"I'm sorry your honor," Phillips replied.

"How about this? God is great, God is good, let us thank him for our food. Ahhhhh. Men."

A perplexed Sanders scratched his head.

"OK," he said. "You couldn't get the war, or the economy or anything like that in there? Gas prices? How about, 'Give our leaders the strength they might do right for the people of the city,' and all that? We hired you for \$200,000! We definitely need 'Harm's way' and 'Iraq' in there somewhere."

Just then, town librarian Millicent Harper stepped to the microphone. Millicent had a habit of causing trouble over the years, was an avid man-hater down on life.

"I agree," she said. "I think if we can't get the prayer right we should just abolish it. We could be talking about that big pile of trash on Fifth Street instead!"

And so the meeting went on, and on.

And everyone fell asleep.

Which, as usual, was probably the right thing to do.