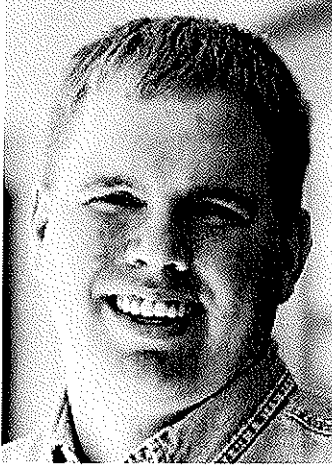


HIS VIEW: An 'asinine exercise in pure stupidity'

By Henry D. Johnston

Posted on: Tuesday, August 30, 2011



Johnston

In my June 7 column I predicted Moscow's hippies would dig out their "leather vests, put on their Birkenstocks and re-adjust their graying ponytails" in response to the movement of ExxonMobil's megaloads up U.S. Highway 95. Now, imagine the belly laugh I enjoyed when I woke up Friday morning and saw on DNews.com a photo, taken by Daily News photographer Dean Hare, of my exact prophecy.

Well, my friends, it's official - I am a modern day Nostradamus.

Now I didn't attend the protest in person, but did review the YouTube footage provided by local politico Tom Hansen. Most of the reporting on the incident is spot-on, so I need not rehash the details here.

But I will say that I was surprised Moscow Mayor Nancy Chaney didn't stand in the crosswalk all by herself, recreating the showdown in Tiananmen Square.

Such behavior from the mayor wouldn't surprise me as she did, after all, send a letter to the Idaho Transportation Department vehemently opposing the megaloads. Regardless of whatever disclosure was made about the letter not representing the official view of the city, it was still sent on city letterhead after the City Council passed a resolution welcoming the transports through our town.

Last I checked, it is the City Council, not the mayor, who sets official positions for the city. I don't know why Chaney thinks she can get away with such shenanigans, but I do

know that if she were to pull a stunt like that in the private sector, she'd most likely find herself in the unemployment line.

At the end of the night, six hippies were arrested and will surely become martyrs of the cause. I'm sure in their own twisted reality these people now hold themselves to the same esteem as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. or Rosa Parks protesting social injustice. I only make this observation because one protester (who was not arrested) suggested that the protests in Moscow were somehow on the same plane as those in Syria.

I don't know what he was smoking, but he better share it, because while the uprising in Syria stems from a desire to end torture and broaden political freedoms - such as freedom of press, speech and assembly. Moscow's protest was nothing more than an asinine exercise in pure stupidity.

For the first time since this debate started, the full and true colors of the "anti" crowd were shown. The opposition to these loads isn't about the size, weight or route of travel. It's not about the permitting process or use of the Idaho State Police as escorts. It's not about the damage that may or may not be caused to our roads.

No, the entire thrust of this opposition is about "big oil" and the Kearl Oil Sands Project. Or it could be many of them are starting to realize that following the Grateful Dead around the country isn't what it used to be.

Either way, why in the hell is it up to Moscow to try to stop a project that isn't even happening in our own state, let alone our own country? Can't Canada make their own decisions about what industrial projects occur inside their borders? If I were a Canadian, I'd take serious offense to the fact that a group of pretentious academics in a town that reeks of pig dung think they know how to manage my country better than I do.

I certainly hope these protests don't become a regular event every time a megaload rolls through town. Local law enforcement has more important tasks than to baby-sit a bunch of overgrown toddlers posing as college students, professors and "enlightened" locals.

And while these protests might make our local hippie conclave "feel better" about "doing their part," they will have absolutely no impact on the end result. The loads will roll one way or another, and the oil sands project will be completed.

So to them I say, just get over it and, in the words of a retired city councilman, "Why don't you just shut up!"

Henry D. Johnston lives in Moscow. He may be reached via email at moscowmoderate@gmail.com