

COMMON SENSE

IN JEFFERSON COUNTY

VOLUME 1 NUMBER 2 JUNE 1987

CITY LOBBIES WITH TAX DOLLARS

NEWS

**City of B'ham
Says Vote
Yes to More
Taxes!**

It's one thing to hold an election to raise taxes. Even when there is nothing else on the ballot and turnout is sure to be low -- leav-

ing the decision to a small percentage of voters -- mostly those with a vested interest in seeing the tax pass.

But it's another thing entirely to spend our tax money to influence people to vote FOR more taxes. It's unethical for sure, a scary precedent to set, and probably illegal!

Yet that's just what Birmingham City Council and the mayor did in the May 12th election to raise taxes for E-911 and the libraries. They threw away \$20,000 of your money on newspaper and radio ads to convince you to give them more money to waste.

It is immoral and arrogant for government officials--who, after all, live off taxes--to spend tax money to lobby us on behalf of more taxes.

We at Common Sense checked with attorneys, the Attorney General's office, and the State Ethics commission. The immediate response of everyone we talked with was, "They can't do that."

Indeed, a state law says no government official may use his office to influence the outcome of an election. The Elections Code is clear, "No person shall attempt to use his official authority or position for the purpose of influencing the vote or political action of any person. Any person who violates this subsection (b) shall be guilty of a felony and punishable by a fine not to exceed \$10,000.00 or imprisonment in the state penitentiary for a period not to exceed two years, or both." If "Vote Yes" ads aren't an attempt to "influence the outcome of an election", we don't know what is.

Even The Birmingham News, which ran one of the ads, said in an editorial that we were right to question the "Vote Yes" fiasco.

We are doing more than that. We intend to sue the wrongdoers over the "Vote Yes" campaign. We will not ask that the election be overturned, because they would probably hold a new one--with all of its expense. We WILL, however, demand that the city officials responsible personally repay the \$20,000 to the taxpayers of Birmingham.

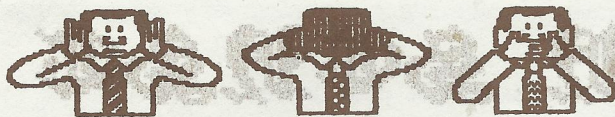
If we don't stop them now, what's next? Spending tax dollars on ads telling us to vote for the incumbents in this year's mayoral and city council races?

By the way, fewer than 10 percent of the voters turned out to decide this great referendum that was supposed to show the "will of the people". Between the expense of putting on the election, and the "Vote Yes" ads, the city spent over \$100,000. That's over \$7.50 per vote! Something's not right, don't you agree?



A WISE AND FRUGAL GOVERNMENT,
WHICH SHALL RESTRAIN MEN FROM
INJURING ONE ANOTHER, WHICH
SHALL LEAVE THEM OTHERWISE FREE
TO REGULATE THEIR OWN PURSUITS
OF INDUSTRY AND IMPROVEMENTS,
AND SHALL NOT TAKE FROM THE
MOUTH OF LABOR THE BREAD IT HAS
EARNED. THIS IS THE SUM OF GOOD
GOVERNMENT, AND THIS IS
NECESSARY TO CLOSE THE CIRCLE OF
OUR FELICITIES.

THOMAS JEFFERSON
FIRST INAUGURAL ADDRESS
1801



HORRIBLE MENTION

Local political actions showing extreme contempt for our Constitutional guarantees of Life, Liberty, or Property. All reports are from the sources listed after each item. Editorial comments are placed in parenthesis.

Last month 72% voted for Impeached County Treasurer Horace Parker's appointment to the Birmingham Water board as the Horror of the Month. 15% voted for all three. Your response with letters, calls, and subscriptions was terrific. A great big THANK YOU to all who responded! Use your Common Sense again this month. Vote for your favorite, using the coupon on the next page.

POLITICOS NEED PAY INCREASE

#1 Pay increases for Birmingham's city council and mayor have been introduced into the legislature. Under the bills the mayor's pay will increase over 30% (\$16,000/yr) from \$52,000 to 68,000. The current expense allowance of \$12,000/year will stay the same. Rep. Gary White, R-Homewood(!?!), sponsored this bill. Rep. George Perdue, D-Birmingham was even more generous with our money. He sponsored two bills for Birmingham city council. Under them Council members could get salary and expense increases of \$11,200/yr (council president even more). Added to the \$15,500 they now get this whopping 72% increase is a pleasant bonus for part time work.

(That ought to make souvenir shopping easier on all their worldwide junkets.)
SOURCE: Birmingham News 5/13/87

Council staff members in Birmingham average \$23,567/yr and are not scheduled for an increase. (Atlanta by comparison pays their staff people an average of \$16,437/yr). Russell Yarbrough (who was against adding personal assistants in 1984), now favors them possibly because his grandson is now making the maximum of \$24,960/yr as his administrative assistant. (Not bad for a UAB college student.) Linda Coleman appears to be more cost conscious starting her sister-in-law off at only \$18,720/yr as her administrative assistant. While not ruling out a pay increase later Ms. Coleman said "It was a learning situation for her".
SOURCE: Birmingham News 6/1/87.

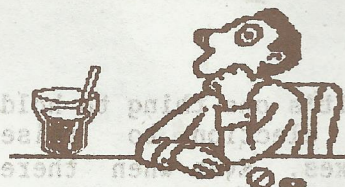


Monny, here's another taxpayer I told about the mayor's and city council's salary increase.

COUNTY COMMISSION FUNDS STUDY "TO TOUT NEED FOR JOB TAX"

#2 Our County commissioners are sure we need a tax increase namely a new County income tax. To be positive they spent \$252,000 of our current tax dollars with two local accounting firms. The contract calls for a "comprehensive study" which will take 75-80 days to do. It will include "...a financial statement that shows the need for the tax increase...", to be presented to State legislators. The firms: Coopers & Lybrand and Banks, Finley, White and Co. were so anxious to do their part they began work 10 days before the contract won approval. (How patriotic!)

SOURCE: BIRMINGHAM POST HERALD 6/10/87



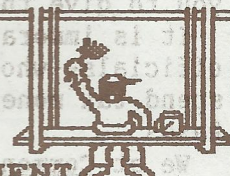
County commissioner John Katapodis' has been unhappy with his new office. (It used to be occupied by former commissioner Ray Moore). One problem is the air conditioning duct above his desk.

"Sometimes it rattles and your sitting their feeling like your in a hurricane," he said. (But thats not all poor John has suffered in earning a measly thousand a week.) He continued, "Not to mention the red shag carpeting that has kept my sinuses infected since I have been here and kept me in a bad mood." (Poor, poor John.) Not to worry an architect drew up plans and the job was bid then re-bid. Finally for just \$14,000 more tax dollars work will be done which includes fixing the air vent and recarpeting the office. (This is probably a big savings over moving the desk and shampooing the rug. Right, John?)

SOURCE: Birmingham Post-Herald 5/22/87

**ATTENTION BUSINESSMEN:
DO NOT ADVERTISE HERE!
TAKE YOUR BUSINESS
ELSEWHERE!**

**THIS SPACE FOR GOVERNMENT
USE ONLY!**



WHAT IS THIS, RUSSIA?

#3 "Welcome to the Soviet Republic of Birmingham. Latest in the attempt to regulate, prohibit or destroy our economic and personal freedoms is a proposed sign regulation ordinance." So begins the editorial in the Birmingham Business Journal 5/18/87.

Besides driving sign makers out of business this law will hurt people involved in any kind of business. Some examples from the third draft of the ordinance which Common Sense reviewed:

Service stations and hotels would not be able to direct traffic to their locations.

Grocery stores would not be able to put up banners advertising their specials. Even a Coke machine with writing on it could be outlawed.

Many landmark billboards would have to come down, like the Liberty National sign or the Michael's restaurant sign.

For what? Just to force some bureaucrat's idea of what looks nice on the rest of us.

The draft we reviewed went on and on. After all our Central Planners worked on it for over six months. Business people would have to get a permit for every sign they own and would be severely limited in the number of signs they could have. The law also sets up "Scenic Corridors" where signs would be virtually outlawed.

Our City Commissars even have the gall to say this will make Birmingham more attractive to business! As Birmingham Business Journal wrote: "That contention is so ridiculous it doesn't deserve comment."

Simple research in other cities with restrictive sign ordinances shows businesses have been devastated by fines and by the cost of changing signs. Not to mention the revenue lost by the lack of outdoor advertising. Total compliance cost in Lubbock, Texas (a city about 1/4 the size of Birmingham) is estimated at over \$2 million.

On the moral side this law is a full-scale attack on freedom of speech and property rights. It does in fact bring us one step closer to living in "The Soviet Republic of Birmingham." SOURCES Birmingham Business Journal, 5/18/87. City draft (#3) of proposed sign ordinance.



RUNNERS UP

Space limitations make choosing items for this column difficult. Consider some of this month's runners up:

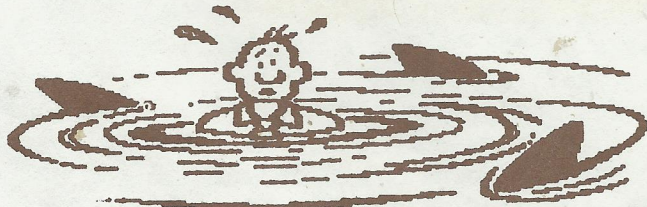
1. Doubling the cost of downtown city parking meters. That should raise an additional 1/2 million and certainly discourage downtown shopping.

2. The nation's toughest smoking ordinance which forbids smoking in many private businesses. Forces private business to file written smoking policy reports and post signs. Puts in penalties of up to \$500 fines and 6 months in jail for smokers and for owners and managers on their own property. Arrest enough smokers and our crime problem will be solved.

3. The new City budget. Almost a 7 million dollar increase for all sorts of goodies. Meanwhile we had a 12.5% increase in violent crime in Birmingham last year. Solution cut the police request for new manpower by 90%+. Arrington said "The solution to crime would have many roots." Well, sir, more wild spending by city hall is not a solution.

4. New restrictions on use of our Parks. Parks WE pay over 11 million dollars a year to support. Now Birmingham's bureaucrats have restricted Freedom of Assembly in most City Parks. Numerous new restrictions are now in effect. One example, groups (even family reunions), of 100 people or more must hire off-duty policemen to supervise them.

If you have any comments or suggestions for our Horrible Mention column please let us know.



COMMON SENSE is a monthly pamphlet for Jefferson County residents. If funds are raised we will mail at least one issue per year to every voter in the County. If you would like to be on our permanent mailing list and receive every issue via 1st class mail, see the coupon below.

If you have or know of a location to distribute Common Sense (store office etc.), please let us know. Any other suggestions or ideas you may have are always welcome.

Like our Founding Fathers, libertarians* believe the people should be masters of government, not the other way around.

Thomas Jefferson said, "Eternal Vigilance is the price of Liberty." We hope to provide that vigilance here in Jefferson County.

Not only will we alert you to the doings of the politicians and bureaucrats, but we will also present positive ideas for improving all aspects of life in our Community.

We wish we could send each issue to every person in the County, but our current budget makes that impossible. Please FEEL FREE to make copies and pass them on to anyone you think would be interested. That's how the original COMMON SENSE (1776) spread like wildfire through early America and helped win our freedom from the English King!

Yours for Liberty,

FRANK MONACHELLI & STEVE SMITH, Editors

*libertarian: One who upholds the principles of liberty. (Websters dictionary)

— Enclosed is \$5. Please add me to your permanent mailing list. Send 1 year of COMMON SENSE 1st class

— Please send gift subscriptions in my name to the people listed. I have enclosed \$5.00 each.

— I would like to spread some Common Sense. Enclosed is a donation.

— I can help distribute Common Sense

— Send me details on upcoming events

— Send me a free issue of your newsletter Alabama Liberty.

— I would like information about the Libertarian Party.

The horror of the month is:

- #1. City Pay Increase
- #2. County Commission
- #3. Sign Ordinance

Name _____

Address _____

COMMON SENSE

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES AND PURPOSE

All citizens in our Republic are bound by and protected by Constitutional law. The supreme law of the land is the United States Constitution. Its preamble states:

"We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution of the United States of America."

As Alabamians' we also choose to live under the Alabama Constitution, which in the Declaration of Rights Declares:

"That the sole and only legitimate end of Government is to protect the citizen in the enjoyment of Life, Liberty, and Property, and when government assumes other functions it is usurpation and oppression."

Our purpose is to help provide the eternal vigilance necessary to remind elected officials and bureaucrats that they are bound by Constitutional law also. That their actions can never exceed the authority granted them. That governments are instituted to protect our rights. That government can never ignore or violate our precious heritage of freedom.

After all its just COMMON SENSE.

FRANK MONACHELLI, STEVE SMITH, Editors

NEWSFLASH!

"LIBERTARIAN CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT RON PAUL, A TEXAS DOCTOR WHO SERVED IN THE CONGRESS FROM 1976-1984 AS A REPUBLICAN, SPOKE TO PARTY MEMBERS LATER IN THE DAY." (Birmingham News 6/7/87)

The preceding was the extent of newspaper coverage of THREE nationally renowned speakers who addressed the Alabama Libertarian Party State Convention June 6th in Birmingham. Common Sense wonders why?

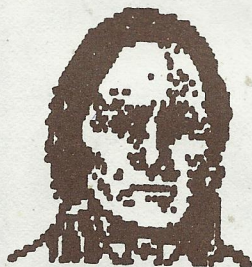
Curious about Dr. Ron Paul, the man responsible for America's new gold coins? A man who's many accomplishments include winning the National Taxpayers Union award for the most pro-taxpayer record EVER!

Another prominent speaker, addressing a crowd of over 100 from all parts of the Southeast, was internationally acclaimed economist, Dr. Walter Williams. A nationally syndicated columnist Dr. Williams' many works include The State Against Blacks. Dr. Williams' expertise on South Africa its problems and the libertarian solution to those problems also went unreported. by Birmingham Newspapers.

A complete report of what these men and others said is being written for the next issue of Alabama Liberty available upon request.

COMMON SENSE
ALABAMA LIBERTARIAN PARTY
P. O. BOX 11514
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA 35202

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 4757
Birmingham, AL



RUSSELL MEANS
LIBERTY PICNIC
JULY 4TH
MAGNOLIA PARK
CALL 322-2991
FOR DETAILS

AMERICAN LIBERTARIAN
21715 PARK BROOK DR.
KATY, TX 77450